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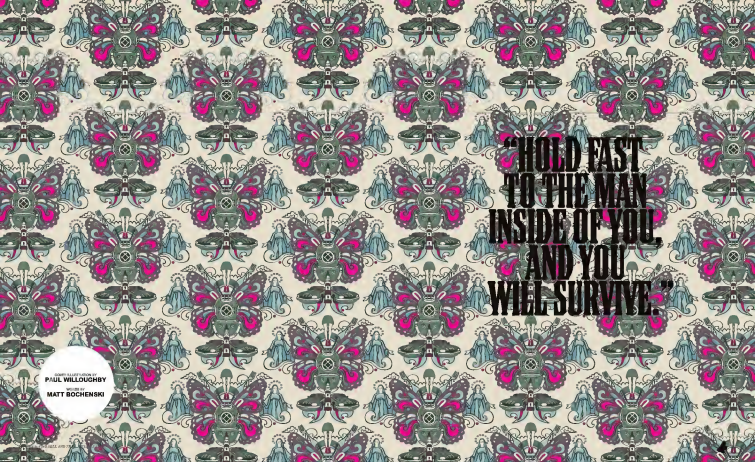
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LITTLE WHITE LIES

Truth & Movies

THE
DIVING
BELL
AND
THE
BUTTERFLY
ISSUE





**"HOLD FAST
TO THE MAN
INSIDE OF YOU,
AND YOU
WILL SURVIVE."**

GRAPH ILLUSTRATION BY
PAUL WILLOUGHBY

WRITTEN BY
MATT BOCHENSKI



ORIGINAL
CAST
CASTING
DIRECTOR
JAMES
MCCARTHY
CASTING
DIRECTOR
JAMES
MCCARTHY

FULL
CAST
LISTING

CHAPTER ONE

*in which we discuss the
dining bell and the butterfly*

It's only taken the blink of an eye for Julian Schnabel to become a great filmmaker.

You've got to love disabled people in the movies. They're like a civic service lesson for normal folk, putting our own lives into perspective with their courageous suffering. Sure, they don't get to do much



else on screen, but then they're not, after all, real people. The fact that disabled actors and writers are almost entirely absent from cinema is beside the point. What would you rather do: engage with a

destructive modern prejudice, or just get Clint Eastwood to kill them off in some noble deathbed scene? Because hey, for all that inspiring bravery, no one really wants to live like that, do they? ▼





Hallsworth's treatment of disability has been suspect to say the least. The noble cripple is the new civilized savage; the acceptable face of an issue we'd rather ignore. And at first glance it's an attitude that *The Diving Bell and the Butterfly* seems to echo. It looks like one of those "films, one which finds a poise dignity in the midst of disability. But it's not. This is the voice of authenticity, a glimpse from a lonely shore brimming with pain, anger and turmoil – all the chaotic complexity of real life.

At the age of 43, Jean Dominique Bauby, the Editor in Chief of French *Elle*, was paralyzed by a cerebrovascular stroke. Suffering from a rare disorder known as "locked-in syndrome", his contact with the world was reduced to the blink of an eye: the only part of himself that he was able to control. With the help of a speech therapist, Hannelotte, Bauby gradually developed a system of communication by blinking at the letters of the alphabet as she recited them. Over the course of a year alongside a young editor Claude, he painstakingly constructed an account of his experiences that was part memoir, part diary and part confessional. He called it *The Diving Bell and the Butterfly*.

John Schnabel admits this autobiopic story with extraordinary voice: "I go with myself," says Bauby (Mathieu Amalric), and so do we in an accelerated first person sequence that pitches us head first into Bauby's world. Colours smear the screen and resolve into sickly light faces crowd the frame, artlessly living beyond the limits of the camera as Bauby's world was reduced to a fraction of perception.

It's a bold, showy opening that has the energy of experimental art, and some of the queasy detail of a medical lecture. It's brilliantly edited to provide hints and reflections of Bauby's unseen face, and superbly photographed by Jirous Kamenik, who captures the thin, faded luminescence of northern France's natural light to give the landscape an isolated, unreal air.

But when Bauby's limbs are trapped as if inside a diving bell, his mind takes flight, like a butterfly across dreams and memories. In these scenes, freed from his own stylistic constraints, Schnabel indulges in vivid flights of fantasy. Bauby envisions the hospital's living history, reduces his young editor at Le Duc, and remembers an old love rather than once took her to Lourdes. Though there's often something overwrought in Schnabel's metaphors, these scenes are both poignant and joyful, and a deep laugh of air in the otherwise claustrophobic atmosphere.

When Bauby's face is finally revealed, old photographs of Mathieu Amalric's smouldering good looks give way to a spent close-up, and it's a shocking transformation. Bauby seeps down his chin, an ugly stain coats one eye, looks at skin creases his neck. Its honesty and simplicity are poignantly combinatorial. But there is Bauby right beside you, struggling through the same emotions, subtly saying that he looks like something "that's come out of a net of formaldehyde." ▼



The beauty of Schnabel's interpretation is that it avoids both pity and melodrama. It's no last Yorker — how could it be? Trapped inside himself, Beaubien is incapable of displaying emotion. Instead, Schnabel and composer Paul Carteron offer us moments of quiet, introspective grief often lightened by flashes of humor.

It's hard to see all that the film borrows from Beaubien's own words. For all his impotent regrets and guilt over past misdeeds (he was haunted by the kidnapping of a colleague on a flight that he himself was supposed to do and he refuses to apologize either for the person he was, or the one he's become), Beaubien was no angel before his accident, and disability doesn't suddenly make him a saint. Slivers of sharp conscience reveal his past life: the models, the magazine shoots, the fancy mistress, the senseless, shallow beauty. And though his disability unfolded something inside him... something that produced a look at real and lasting beauty it didn't change the essence of the man. His mind reacts to the women in his life in the same thousand ways it ever did, and by the same token, he's still capable of moments of great cruelty, especially against those same women. He reduces Hennessey (Marie-Josée Croze) to insanity by his insistence that he wants to die, and with a kind of sadistic force he uses wife to blackmail her into a phone call with his mistress.

It would be tedious to suggest that Anaïs's performance is "brave", but it's undeniably committed. He allows his body to become an object of curiosity in its stark, subversive nudity. Consider this to be the charisma he craves in flashback or fantasy, and you begin to get a sense of how far he's had to go to lose any trace of that burning sexuality. He's supported by the great and the good at the French acting establishment, with Marie-Josée Croze and Clotilde Loperf, Germanika, the standard as the two therapists who send Beaubien hurtling with sexual frustration.

If there's a problem, it's that the message is a little too loud and clear: "I wanted this film to help you handle your own death," is how Schnabel has described it — a lyrical ambition for any film, no matter how well crafted. But it scarcely detracts from the fact that *The Diving Bell and the Butterfly* is an exquisite and moving experience. It's not a worthy or manipulative film. It's simply the story of a man whose physical disability marked changes that were far more profound, but who remained true to his sense of self — for better and for worse — until the end. And if that sounds like just another lesson to be learned, it's one that might teach us something about disability itself, rather than our own insecurities. In that respect, perhaps it's one worth learning. ■



Anticipation. A former winner from a unique artist, but potentially another de-gender disability film. **B+**

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The principles of the present Convention shall be:

- a. Respect for inherent dignity, individual autonomy including the freedom to make one's own choices, and independence of persons;
- b. Non-discrimination;
- c. Full and effective participation and inclusion in society;
- d. Respect for differences and acceptance of persons with disabilities as part of human diversity and humanity;
- e. Equality of opportunity;
- f. Accessibility;
- g. Equality between men and women;
- h. Respect for the evolving capacities of children with disabilities and respect for the right of children with disabilities to preserve their identities.

Article 1. General Principles

The United Nations Convention on the Rights of People with Disabilities

Page No.

144-145

CHAPTER TWO

in which we
introduce ourselves



LWLies:

What is it that you love about movies?

Marie-Josée Croze:

Well, it's a really hard question. I like when I don't understand everything, and I like when I see, for example, Bergman - he has this effect on me. When I watch his films I just feel that it's so true and so real, but I cannot explain it because it's touched the unconscious bit of my brain or something inside my stomach, and I start crying and I don't know why. That's why I don't like psychological films; I like it more when films are, like David Lynch, I love David Lynch and Cronenberg and those people who are really inventive and try to catch me in a place that I don't know, so I discover something inside of me in a way. That's why I don't like thrillers. I don't like it when I have to put my logical nerve and watch a film like a story. No, I like when it's a monster. I like when a film is a monster and just eats me. Those are the films that modify the way you see life. When you see a David Lynch film, life is not the same - afterwards it's impossible to see exactly the same things.

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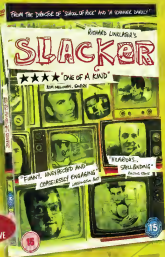
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"A GROUND-BREAKING MASTERPIECE" - EMPIRE

Slacker (slæk'ter), n. 1. a person who evades his or her duty or work; ditherer
2. a person who evades military service.
3. term popularised in the early 1990s for an esp. educated young person who is anti-materialistic, purposeless, apathetic, and usually works in a dead-end job and rejects the values of the generation before them.
4. the title of a film directed by Academy Award® nominee Richard Linklater.

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LETTERS

The more, more love, a little hate and proof positive that our needs are damned to hellfire. In the meantime, let's celebrate whoever sends us the most thought-provoking message, or maybe just the best put-down we'll receive. Three copies of Cobra Beer to get the New Year off to an indignant start.

HERETIC!

Loved The Enigma's Limited Edition, except that (GROSS!) on the celebration of the birth of China rather than his death. That's Easter—Amen.

PRaise INDEED

The magazine is pure indie music heaven. It's a lot of fun, I really like it. Even if I don't agree all the time.

Carlie

STRIKE OUT

Someone, I passed the link away, then I half expected some sort of comment on the various websites? Which on the 10 What Is The Indie Position? Fellowship, judging by the email coming out of YouTube recently, I thought the debate had been going for a few years now.

Annie Helms

We're here following the coverage but we didn't really find the need to add our voice to it. So much of the discussion regarding of Hollywood in the UK is already obvious that we

don't want to step into the minefield. For anybody who wants to get up to speed on events, Mike Finkel is probably the best place to start (you don't need to be a fan of the band—A word of warning not everybody thinks Finkel is an important reporter to approach with caution).

BRITS KICK ASS

Ever Little White Lies, re: "Bollywood happened to the indie kids" on the web, pretty contemporary. Even those talented bluesmen, not much option to go on. It is interesting that there's so many more British directors making their mark here — Roger Sargent, Paul Greenough and Shane Meadows are making some of the best films around today.

Ed Miles

CRAP CONNERY

Little White Lies, Look what you've ended us up sticking up for Sean Connery. I'm so happy for the man, but I don't think he deserves a fake shawarma. Granted, he's done

very little of worth in the past 20 years (he was brilliant in The Fall, Last Crusade and Mission: Impossible), but he's also done very few gorgeous films. League of Extraordinary Gentlemen was a nice exception, but there are far worse offenders than poor old Sean. Why not direct your steely gaze at Colin Firthing at or John Travolta?

Nolan Quinn

John Travolta is a kick joke, and Mike's right, what's the point? He'll just leave him to his own private hell. But Connery was an actor who played it all away with easy charm and a total lack of respect for his audience and talents. He deserves everything he gets (and he doesn't get half as much as he should).

OH, THE HORROR

In those a minutes for good movie time you have? The picture just seems to have engulfed everything and blinded me to anything more intelligent. Will we ever see the likes of Ben's Look Out, the shining or ever something like Hush?

Finally, I'm asking if you have something I don't? Any recommendations?

Nick

You could do worse than to go currently on Amazon, an excellent Amazon gift. It's, or look out for another's Funny Games remake later in 2006. Ben's best. Extra 2006 gift.

KNOW YOUR LIMITS

I respect that Indie press didn't do its independent voice — you're not afraid to speak to your mind, and that has to be a good thing. But think, though, on it really nice to start talking about about Birmingham? I'm not saying they're a bunch of couch-sitting people. Sometimes press is unaware of TABBACCI VIOLENCE. But I think you were. That's cool, but seriously, I look forward to my regular dose of the mag, and if someone comes and gives you up, what the hell are the rest of us going to do? Buy one of the other mags on the shelf? I don't think we'll look your light, guys. Don't mess with the Great Indie Mag.

Dan

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AT CINEMAS DECEMBER 26



CHAPTER THREE

*in which we discuss themes
of uncommon interest inspired
by our feature film*

NOTHING ABOUT US WITHOUT US

WORDS BY MATT BOCHERSKI
PHOTOGRAPHY BY SAM CHRISTMAS AND CHRIS CIRIENS

WHILE CELEBRATED ACTORS BAG AWARDS FOR PLAYING DISABLED ROLES, PERFORMERS WITH DISABILITIES ARE BEING PUSHED INTO THE BACKGROUND. WE ASKED THREE ACTORS TO TALK FRANKLY ABOUT WHAT'S GOING ON, AND WHAT THEY'RE GOING TO DO ABOUT IT.

There have been some cracking performances by disabled actors over the years. They were the stars of the show in *Pierle* (1932), and who could forget *The Hunchback of Notre-Dame* (1936). Herbert Gorman's fascist fan film, which helpfully explained the state's policy of "mercy killing" to the German people, and which was so good Hitler himself made sure it was played in every cinema in the country. Damn, there was a few years there when disabled actors couldn't stop getting work.

Maybe we've come a long way since then, but when your starting point is mass extermination it's hard to get excited. Today disabled people make up 14 per cent of the UK population, but you wouldn't believe it from watching on the TV. It's great when a company like Aardman Animations uses *Creature Comforts* to put disability in the spotlight, but the truth is, for every Disability Film Festival that pushes the merits of disabled actors, there are a hundred barriers to equality in the system: from access to ignorance to blatant discrimination.

For a while there it all seemed like it might be different. In 1976, Britain's Union of the Physically Impaired Against Segregation boldly claimed that "It is society which disables physically impaired people." This was the era of cup theatre and other radical art

movements that sought to reclaim the identity of disability. At the NFF, Allan Guthrie and Steve Dawson programmed the pioneering *Carry On Cripple* season, while independent theatre companies sprang up around the country. This was the fuck you face of disability, telling it like it was regardless of whether people wanted to listen.

But even as guys like Billy Goffus continued to push the envelope, showing *When Ray Broke His Head...* and *Other Tales of Blunder* at Sundance in 1995 (tag line: "This isn't exactly your inspirational cripple story!"), the mainstream proved stubbornly resistant to equality. Rather than open the flood to disabled performers, Hollywood preferred to let its rich and famous spazz up like modern day marionettes while telling itself how courageous they were.

"They don't want gangs of disabled people in the movies," says Lucy Owen, editor of *Meat* magazine. "The *Vision of the Disability Market*." It's like a vision of death. That's what goes on in the minds of people who want to have their movies and all their fancy occasions without us."

How long can we keep disabled actors knocking at the door before they lock it down, wheelchair or not? To see if the winds of change are blowing, we spoke to three actors and asked them to share the highs and lows of their professional lives. ▼

ANNA CANNINGS THE PIONEER

As a child, my interest started out in radio drama, then I did voice-over work for audio magazines as a teenager, and eventually I came into acting. It was something that was born of other things, but it's a love that's grown. My big break was an audition for a guest lead role in ITV's *Millennium* and they I got the part, and then had the huge shock of going from 40-second commercials to a nine-figure role in a prime time drama, which was terrifying but great, fun, and obviously really good for my career.

When I'm on set, the only difference really is that I need the script in advance because I put it into Braille, and on the day I'll have an access worker there to read it to me in case there are changes. In terms of the physical filming process, the only adjustment that would have to be made is if I have to walk a specific route that has to be accurate in terms of the direction it's a tight frame. I might need to practice that a couple of times to make sure that I'm going to be able to walk exactly where they want me to.

I have felt discriminated against in my career. Right from wanting to go to a film school, which I went through to my career choices now. There have been people along the way who have either very subtly or more fully given me the same message: "Don't bother", or, certainly "Think long and hard before you do it". And I also know of people who've gone for castings where they are supposedly looking for somebody with a disability, but then a non-disabled actor gets the role. Even if the non-disabled actor has more experience, with so few actors as we have can we ever be expected to build up as much experience and therefore be as proficient as an actor who probably goes to castings most weeks?

The way the castings are run at the moment, and the way the system is, means that there are a lot of barriers, which obviously limits the amount of work you can go for. Hence why I've got a pretty diverse career.

I don't think there is enough risk taking, and I think there's always a thing to sanitise disability. For some directors, if a person looked different, say because of their eyes, everything else about them would have to be perfect if they were going to make that compensation. And I don't think there is enough brought up as to how disability can be a part of a piece of drama without it having to be the central feature. It's true that I do things slightly differently because of my disability but I certainly wouldn't discuss it in everyday life like it's discussed in dramas. Instead of being issue based, it could be far more interesting and discrete if it was just there – just part of you as a person – rather than a major part of the storyline.

There's a lot of people you could blame if you were going to go down that route. You could blame commissioning editors, you could blame writers, you could blame casting directors, you could blame us as performers for not being vocal enough. But it's difficult to be vocal when people aren't necessarily that interested in listening to you. I would like to see true inclusive casting, that would be a perfect world, but I see that that is an awful long way off in terms of film.

Anna Cannings is an actress who was born with bilateral microphthalmia, which means that her eyes haven't fully developed. She was the first blind pupil to attend a mainstream school. >





PAUL HENSHALL THE SUPERSTAR

Right from being a child I was interested in entertaining people. I did the school plays as most wannabe actors do, then I went to college and did a BTEC in performing arts. Following that – after quite a lot of discrimination from places – I managed to enrol at drama school.

Some of the places said that they didn't see the point in training disabled actors at that time because there was no work for us, and a lot of them had no access. It was a real battle to get anywhere. It was devastating, but if you don't get in somewhere, it's very difficult to prove that you're being turned down on the grounds of disability. You have to be careful – if you complain too much you quickly get a reputation for being 'difficult'. But one of the things you need as an actor is tenacity, and I had supportive parents who wouldn't allow me to give up. I eventually managed to pull through, but it was heart-breaking.

What's even harder is facing the criticism from within the disabled community [about being a token presence]. I have spent many hours arguing over them, because all I'm trying to do is be an actor. In my view, the strongest way we can fight against discrimination is just to do the job. There's not really a lot more we can do. I'm ultimately just an actor – I get paid to do the job and I have to do what I've told. I can't afford to make waves.

I never wanted to be a trailblazer, and I wouldn't wish it on anybody. All I want to do is work as an actor – that's all I ever wanted – so to have what feels like a constant eye over my shoulder watching everything I do is quite difficult. Just give me a break – I'm doing

the best I can with the parts I get offered. If I really thought they were doing damage to our cause I would speak up, but all I can do is be true to myself. I can't reflect the point of view of every disabled person in this country.

I suppose the roles that I've played on television have all been 'about' disability to a greater or lesser degree, in the same way that black actors in the '70s were all playing parts to do with the colour of their skin. To move forward, we need to look at roles in other areas, maybe the theatre. I think the theatre could do a lot more because although it may be less heard about than television, any area we can get into which will push us forward and let us be seen by people in another way is going to be helpful.

If I was in charge I'd open up more training courses, I would talk to drama schools and say 'Look, we want to give disabled actors roles and see them playing parts on the television, but we need you as an institution to give them the training.' That's where it needs to start. But then acting is renowned as a difficult profession – there's no point getting too angry about that because all actors suffer. If you're not prepared for that, then you don't go into it.

Paul Henshall is an actor who got his big break in the drama *It's a Wonderful Life* before landing a gig on *Holly City*. He has cerebral palsy, a disability that affects the limbs. Part of his brain was damaged when he was born prematurely and resuscitated by doctors. "But really, they still don't know that much about it," he says. **W**

SASHA HARDWAY THE MODEL SLASH ACTRESS

My mum entered me for a modelling competition in the local newspaper when I was at school, but when I got through to the catwalk, she said, "Look, you can't go because you're in a wheelchair." They won't be able to cope with you." She didn't want to disappoint me because I'd had some bad experiences when I was younger when people weren't prepared for me to show up like this, but I was really upset. So a while later I applied for a TV show called *Model Behaviour*, and I let them know that I was in a wheelchair.

Eventually through that, I was signed to a disabled talent agency.

I didn't realize that disabled people could do acting. You don't really think about it, do you? Well - I didn't, but then I got my first job as extra in a TV commercial, and after that I was in the background in *The Bill*. As soon as I'd got those jobs, I wanted to do more, but proper acting rather than just in the background. Then there was an audition for a Stephen Polaski film, *Five Kids and Gremlins*, so I went for that and I got it. That was my first run acting job.

I'm still young but what I've noticed is that there weren't that many roles for disabled people, and it's a shame when actors who are able-bodied get them. We don't want to put disabled people in something just for the sake of it, but it means that they're ignoring somebody who's as good at acting and who's probably going to be more natural when they're in a wheelchair.

I think that people in society don't know how to cope with wheelchairs, and because people in normal, everyday life can't deal with it, the media have found it hard to incorporate it. Maybe it's because if they see someone young in a wheelchair they feel bad because they think that you're worse off than them. But just because you're in a wheelchair doesn't mean you're worse off than somebody else.

It's because people in the media portray people in wheelchairs as being ill. Maybe when people who are disabled are in everyday situations, like when they go to job interviews or they go to uni, or they meet new people, then people will treat them normally rather than different, and they'll be able to look past the disability. Once people get over disability and see you as a person, that's when they're going to start seeing us in films. That's when you'll be accepted and integrated.

People have to get used to disability first. My mum's a carer at a community centre and looks after people with disabilities during the day. With some of the people there, usually it's something that's difficult to look at. People need time to get used to that sort of thing. It scares them - if you say "Do you want to watch something and, on your... it's about disability," people get worried. That's why you won't see it on TV or film, but things like that are true. That's my life.

I'd like to become the first Hollywood disabled actress, the same status as Cate Blanchett. Could you have someone as big as Cate Blanchett in a wheelchair? I think it's more hopeful for future generations if there are good disabled actors out there, then people can't be turned down forever, can they?

Sasha Hardway is an actress and model who has a rare form of dystonia, a disability that causes pain in her muscles and means she is unable to put her hands on the floor or keep her balance. At least, the doctors think she does; nobody seems sure. "It's complicated," she says. ■

Special thanks to Louise Dyson of VisiblePeople.org
www.visiblemodels.co.uk. All these transcripts are available to read in full, online. It's well worth your time.



THE ARTIST

WORD BY MIKE BRITT
ILLUSTRATION BY PAUL WILKINSON

FILM MAY HAVE ALLOWED JULIAN SCHNABEL TO COME OUT OF HIS CHRYSALIS, BUT HE'LL NEVER ADMIT TO BEING MORE THAN A NOT-SO-HUMBLE ARTIST.



That is, like any truly mythmaking cultural figure, so his accounts of the controversial New York artist bear more than a passing resemblance to one another. A man of many identities and now, Schnabel's extraordinary string of accolades, controversies, groundbreaking creations and hubristic failures has allowed him to propitiate a reputation as an accomplished polymath, while the artist himself asserts time and again that he wishes only to be considered a painter.

If this reputation for egotism was less well publicized, you might mistake his narrow definition as modesty. Those familiar with Schnabel's distinctive brand of bombast are more inclined to put it down to his legendary cantankerousness. Having famously asserted that "I see myself as a painter even if I make sculptures", it was no surprise when Schnabel greeted the completion of his extensive redesign of Ian Schrager's Gramercy Park Hotel with the claim that he was "not a designer". Even his signature plate paintings of the late 1990s and 1980s — a raucous cacophony of broken ceramics and thickly layered paint — seem to have been a product of the artist's bloody-minded insistence on differentiating himself at all costs. As he remarked of his inspiration at the time, "I thought that if painting is dead, then it's a nice time to start painting."

Schnabel has courted contradiction and controversy ever since he burst onto the arts scene in 1973, sandwiching several slides of his work between pieces of bread before submitting them to the Whitney Museum's Independent Study Program. It was a fitting introduction to a man whose working life has spanned four decades and a multitude of occupations, from cabaret to interior designer, sunglasses salesman to sculptor, short order cook and — latterly — filmmaker.

Given the range of his life experience — and the maligned nature of his work — it was perhaps inevitable that no amount of commercial success would see Schnabel's distinctive brand of aesthetic manglerism easily accepted by the arts establishment. If anything, the seemingly bulletproof performance of his work at auction has inflamed the intellectual ire of critics, with the heady prices he achieved in the early 1990s contrasting starkly with the tiracous critical rejection they received. While some artists have benefited from historical re-evaluation, the passage of time has, for the most part, continued to pour cold water on Schnabel's credentials as a painter. Even while newspapers and magazines have lined up to dismiss his work as "plagiarism and acts of chromatic grossness" (The Guardian), and Schnabel himself as "a blow-up karate fighter looking at an open door" (The New York Sun), the work remains commercially buoyant, frequently exceeding auction estimates. Such school would have eroded the self-belief of a less talented artist.

Fortunately the least than quiet confidence of a man who once declared, "I'm as close to Picasso as you're going to get in this fucking life", remains unaffected by the barbs of the critical community. It may or may not be an elaborate charade, but Schnabel himself seems to care little whether people view him as a certified eccentric or just plain certifiable. As he stated in a 2003 Observer interview: "I've been living with a lot of negativity for the past 15 years, but it never impacted on my work, or my way of working. It's like a rhinoceros with birds sitting on its back. It stopped me getting comfortable but it never worried me."

But or no shit, there's no doubt that Julian Schnabel does things his own way, with a single-minded vision — and the grim determination required to realize it — that belongs to the artist alone. Tales of brusqueness and unconventional direction periodically emerge from his film sets, but his collaborators rarely doubt him. As Maria Jose Geste — co-star of *The Diving Bell and the Butterfly* — has it, "It's a reality in the moment and really creative, and he's just like, 'Do it! Let's try it! Sometimes it's kind of rude, the way he expresses stuff, but it's always for the best in the film.' Geste's experiences echo those of Javier Bardem on the set of *Birds of Night* Falls, where he claims that, "Working with Julian puts you in a place where you have to face whether you are an artist or not. The soul is wide open. That's a good thing, but it demands a lot of courage."

It is impossible to know whether the pathologically painterly Schnabel appreciates the irony that his success as a director has prompted some critics to suggest that he should have fetched his wagon to that profession earlier in life. After his 1996 debut feature *Disquiet* received positive reviews, his 2000 effort *Jackson Night* Falls garnered even more enthusiastic acclaim — along with an Oscar nomination for young star Bardem. Having chalked up a Best Director win at the 2007 Cannes Film Festival for *The Diving Bell and the Butterfly*, it seems that a positive critical consensus regarding the former rebel trouble is finally in danger of breaking out. At the very least, say non fans, cinema may be an ideal diversion from the temptation to put paint on canvas once more.

Whether Schnabel will ever accept the simple title of "film director" without considering it a slight on his artistic pretensions is difficult to say. Even when discussing his film work, he insists that, "Most directors are a diary and a map, I use a painter's map. What I choose to look at, what I illustrate by music, where I put the camera, it's all painting." Nevertheless, in more mellow moments, Schnabel has at least been able to admit that his formidable array of talents has allowed him to function "like a crap notator. One season is crowds, one season it's pointers." Whatever the artist perceives *The Diving Bell and the Butterfly* to be, let's hope he keeps filling the soul. ■



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UNTITLED: JULIAN SCHNABEL

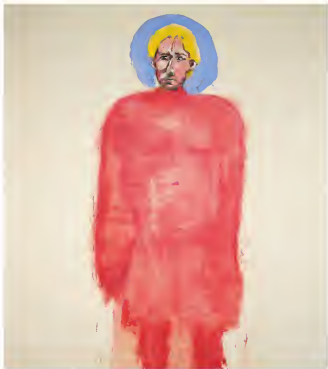
WHEN HE SWAGGERED ONTO THE ART SCENE IN THE 1970S, JULIAN SCHNABEL WAS SIMULTANEOUSLY HAILED AS A LEADING LIGHT OF THE NEO-EXPRESSIONIST MOVEMENT AND DERIDED AS A BOHEMIAN CHANCER WITH LITTLE TO OFFER OTHER THAN A STRONG LINE IN SELF-PUBLICITY.

SEEMINGLY IMPERVIOUS TO SUCH CRITICISM, THE ARTIST SET TO WORK ON CREATIONS OF STRIKING SIZE AND UNCONVENTIONAL TEXTURE. HIS PAINTINGS ON BROKEN CROCKERY, VELVET, SURFBOARDS AND TARPULINS WERE ALL CREATED WITH THE INTENTION OF EVOKING AN EMOTIONAL STATE "THAT PEOPLE CAN LITERALLY WALK INTO AND BE ENGULFED BY".

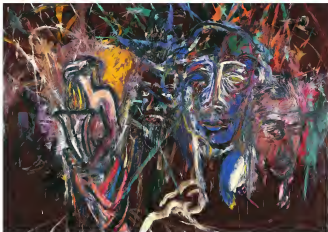
PREPARE TO BE ENGULFED.



Shidei (Japanese Painting), 1901
Oil, wax, and ink on paper; 55 x 55"
Collection of the Artist



Portrait of Christ 7, 2006
Oil, varnish, rubber stain glass on canvas, 100 x 100"
Emma Carroll



Julian Schnabel, *The Disoriented Death
of Alvin Karpis on the Tropic, 1935*
Oil on canvas, 111 x 104"

Julian Schnabel, *Teddy Bears Picnic, 1987*
Oil on canvas on carpenter, 54 x 65"



Jakob Tzschentz, *St. Sebastian*, 1777
Oil on canvas, 111 x 66"



Jakob Tzschentz, *Ozymandias*, 1779
Oil, plaster, paper (watercolor) on
oil canvas, 164 x 114"



Jakob Tzschentz
Portrait of Christ by Jakob Tzschentz
Watercolor
Engraving 1780
publicdomaincollection.org

STATE OF THE ART



**JULIAN SCHNABEL
ISN'T THE FIRST
ARTIST TO
TRANSFER HIS
SKILLS FROM
CANVAS TO FILM:
FROM SALVADOR
DALÍ TO THE
TURNER PRIZE,
GALLERIES ARE AS
NATURAL A HOME
FOR FILMMAKERS
AS THE MULTIPLEX.
AND YET ART
CINEMA CONTINUES
TO BAMBOOZLE
AUDIENCES. *LW/LIES*
INVESTIGATES THE
FINAL FRONTIER
OF FILM. WORDS
BY STEVE WATSON**

Spend 10 minutes thinking about 'art' films and what do you get? Oh Gwyneth Paltrow certainly, a bit of Andy Warhol perhaps, or the index card that once up every year in the Turner Prize. Of course, anything from *The Seventh Seal* to *Jane Austen* can be called 'arthouse', but that term is so broad that it isn't much use in defining anything other than 'not Hollywood'. So what is art cinema? And why does it manage to fascinate and enthrall in equal measure?

Difficult definitions have been used in an attempt to put a firmer grip on the subject. For Murray Smith, Professor of Film Studies at Kent University, the question isn't so much 'What is art cinema?' as 'What isn't it?' He draws a distinction between art-house and the avant-garde, which is characterised by a desire to challenge and subvert rather than to entertain. Fitzpatrick and Academic Nicky Haining agree, but in his book, *Film and Art Photography*, he goes a step further to draw a distinction between so-called 'gallery artists' who happen to use film as just another artistic medium, and those experimental filmmakers whose work investigates and comments upon the medium of film itself. ▼

Mark Hollings. *Image: GSKG*



Left: Mohamed El Mehenni, *Be Silent Our Mother's House* (2006) screen video for the Berlin Film Festival

Below: Chris Sieghart and David Shrigley alter film, *After the Last War, I Read* (2002)

Right: Peter Dinklage (2006) short film with music by White

But just as one corner of the genre is pressed down, another begins flipping in the breeze. The advent of digital filmmaking, for example, has even led to a new type of hybrid artist, who may work across live action, animation, CG and sound in order to provide film packages for advertising, music videos, computer games, installations and nightclubs. Film as art, it's clear, is a fluid discipline that in its short history has already notched up a bewildering array of movements, styles and schools, and yet for all their differences, there is a simplicity of purpose that unites them.

The best art questions our assumptions about the world, and in that respect all filmmakers begin with a medium ripe for subversion. The combination of sound and moving image gives us the simplest and most direct way of representing the world, whether in news reports, documentaries, home videos or even something as simple as porn. For the film artist, the challenge is to take this method of recording and reproducing footage, and use it to shock, provoke and tempt – to create art.

The impulse to subvert film has led to some groundbreaking examples of extreme art. In the 1950s, surrealist painter and photographer Man Ray created his *Rayograms* by placing a series

of objects directly onto film, which was then exposed to light to create strangely beautiful X-ray effect images. Even more oblique are the flicker films of the mid-1950s, most famously associated with Tony Conrad. A year before Michelangelo Antonioni's *Blow-Up* would be hailed as the seminal 'art' film of the decade, Conrad took a regular sequence of black and white frames whose pattern, when viewed in its unprojected form, is obvious, but blurry when projected at 24 frames per second to produce visual palpitosis created by the eye. By creating this strange physical sensation, the flicker artists were able to comment on the difference between the frames that appear on the screen and the film as it is experienced by the viewer, who unconsciously assembles the action in their head.

Nicky Haurin believes that such aggressively serious film art was very much a product of its time. "In the '70s there was much more antagonism," he says. "A lot of filmmakers were antagonistic to commerce, and very politicized in their filmmaking. Their stuff was quite serious, quite long and offbeat, but then the '80s generation reacted against that and produced work that was much more playful and poetic and short. And of course that happens all the time in the history of art – one group reacts against another."

While post-1970s film may be more playful, that's not to say it doesn't have the underlying rigour demands that elevate it to the status of art. This year's Turner Prize, for example, was won by Mark Wallinger, whose *Sleeper*, a two and a half hour film, shows the artist dressed in a bear costume wandering Berlin's New National Gallery at night. It has an undeniable sense of fun, but also addresses issues of integration and identity. The artist is filmed from outside the gallery by a voyeuristic, hand-held camera, which makes it unclear whether the bear, the symbol of Berlin, is trapped inside the gallery or if the viewer is locked out.

Incorporating the viewer's physical presence in the experience is characteristic of art films, and perhaps what unnerves some audiences. *Sleeper* has been repeated inside Tate's Unexposed, where a sleek black box that visitors must enter to watch the film stands in for the surroundings of the New National Gallery. In such conditions the unease and uncertainty transmitted by the cinema is amplified. While traditional cinema may provide experience, Wallinger takes us out of our comfort zone and asks the kind of questions about our own perception that we're unused to answering.

Creators have their part to play in mediating between artist and audience, it's simply not enough



any more to run a film on a loop in the dark corner of a gallery. In Jennifer and Kevin McCoy's exhibition *Tiny, Funny, Big and Bad*, for example, a series of miniature scenes unfold as a network of small cameras, which show the 'action' taking place on a large screen. What appears on that screen is nonsensical, but by walking around the entire series and watching the film being made in real time, the viewer appreciates how they connect, and is able to enjoy the thrill of being 'backstage'.

It's hard to imagine the effects of either *Sleeper* or *Tiny, Funny, Big and Bad* being achieved by any other medium, but Laurence Sifers, one of the curators of this year's Turner Prize, is clear that film is really just another tool to be used by the artist.

"I think good art is good art: some people know how to use video and others don't," he says. "I don't think of video as anything very peculiar in its own right. I did a show here quite recently with Bruce Nauman, who's a very interesting artist and in many people's minds is the father of video art, and he said it wasn't video in its own right that attracted him to the medium, it was just that it was sometimes an appropriate way to record and document whatever was preoccupying him at the time."

But while it's common for artists to alternate between painting, sculpture, installation and video, one drawback of this is that often they're not exploring what the technology is truly capable of. For the modern pioneers of film art, you need to look beyond the Tate and its ilk to the likes of One Dot Zero. Established in 1995 to monitor and promote the then fledgling medium of digital moving images, its most recent book, *Medium Blue Z*, collects some of the most interesting work of contemporary digital filmmakers, much of it departing with conventional ideas of plot or narrative to deal instead in short vignettes and visual experimentation.

According to Shane Walter, head of One Dot Zero, audiences are more open than ever to these new and often challenging experiences. "Audiences now have a very sophisticated visual language," he says. "It's a very exciting time. There's a whole new area now that I call 'entertainment', which is all about short bursts. If you look at the cartoons and filmmakers in *Medium Blue Z*, I think they're an example of what the landscape is going to be like in the future."

Digital imagery and entertainment are perfect for idents, adverts and music videos, and as such are highly commercial. However,

there is massive potential for this new frontier of filmmaking to be used artistically. Could we see a day when artists working in moving images become more specialised, producing work that unifies the thematic and ideological depth of art with the visual flair of today's multimedia creations? What is optimistic.

"I think we're developing a richer idea of what entertainers do," he says, "and arguably some of the best entertainment currently on television is the stuff in between the programmes. We've been obsessed with putting these moving images in boxes, like if it's an advert then it's not art, and if it's in a gallery it is art, or if it's in a cinema it's a film. I think those kind of traditional boxes are breaking down, and I think younger people are much happier to experiment. It's not just about eye candy – it's what you do with it afterwards as well." ■

Check out ICA Essentials: The Secret Misadventures of Cinema! at Tate Modern from January 18-21 for a special preview of a series of trail-blazing artists' films from the likes of Luis Buñuel and Jan Svankmajer selected by six emerging young trustees. Then head to the ICA from January 25 to see *Essentials: Dreams* for more of the same mind-blowing stuff.

LITTLE JOE AND THE FACTORY

"Little Joe never once gave it away.
Everybody had to pay and pay.
A hundred here and a hundred there,
New York City is the place where they said
'Hey babe, take a walk on the wild side.'
I said, 'Hey Joe, take a walk on the wild side.'
Lou Reed, "Walk on the Wild Side"

JOE DALLESSANDRO WAS THE ANGEL FACE OF ANDY WARHOL'S ART FILMS, BUT THIS ICON OF '60S SEXUALITY IS FAR FROM COMFORTABLE WITH HIS LEGACY.

WORDS BY MATT BOCHENSKI ILLUSTRATION BY RICHARD MERRICK

Joe Dallesandro was five years old when his mother was convicted of grand larceny and his father, a navy man, put him and his brother into state care. It was 1952: the start of a long slide of foster homes, trouble making, street gangs, vandalism and stolen cars that ended 10 years later with a police pursuit and a bullet in the leg. He was moved to a juvenile detention facility where an Italian mafia boss and brother of Frank gave him the "Little Joe" tattoo immortalized on Lou Reed's lyric.

After three months he escaped and headed for Mexico, living in a cave before returning to New York via Los Angeles. By now 16-year-old Joe had an ugly chisel cheek and a street bouncer, but the kind of body that sent guys and girls into spasms of lust. He hooked up with photographer Bob Mizer, owner of the magazine *Physique Pictorial* and turned model, mostly with men. Joe wasn't handsome, he was beautiful, untouched, and no matter what he did no matter how far his experiences pushed him, nothing seemed to be able to diminish the sense of perfection that enveloped him like an aura.

Back in New York, Joe got married and settled down next to a Mediterranean dining, just across the way from a recovery house for drug addicts. He was looking for a dealer when he wandered into the building where Andy Warhol was shooting *The Loves of Ghislaine*, into the same room, just out of campsite into the camera, just out of coincidence, and into a new life as a Warhol superstar and icon of the sexual underground.

Those are the facts of Joe's early life, and you never know some of them might even be true. If anything, it's a shock to learn that he's still alive. So much of the romance around Warhol and The Factory is based on the assumption that everybody died — so they can't get old and ugly and look up the myth. But Joe, somewhat, an uneasy testament not just to the fact that it was real, but that some of it was false.

But if you're looking to Joe as the leper of society, you're going to be disappointed. His career might have peaked 20 years ago but he's now Charles Hertz obsessing over the park from some trailer park Xanadu. You can try and get him to engage with The Factory era, but it's going to be a long and rocky road.

Here's an example: This is the guy whose work with Warhol and Paul Morrissey revolutionized male sexuality in Morrissey's *Robin Joe* became the first ever mainstream male nude. It was radical and shocking — he was an erotic fantasy who transformed millions regardless of the old divisions of gay and straight. Ask him about his today, and here's what you get: "I never looked at people for their sexual preference and I didn't expect people to look at me and ask me what my sexual preference was. It I wasn't sharing that with you it means I wasn't interested in you, and it would be none of your business." End of. Talk to the hand.

On the subject of drugs, Joe, a self-confessed heroin addict for years before he kicked the habit in 1985, is even more evasive. Though he worked in Europe in the early '70s, where drugs weren't exactly hard to come by, he claims they weren't a part of his life. "I wasn't involved with it, I didn't know about it and didn't associate or hang out with people that did it," he says. "It just wasn't something that I wanted to do."

What about The Factory, though? Warhol surrounded himself with a menagerie of porn stars, drug queens, drug addicts, musicians, and true thinkers, but despite this, Joe claims that there's a misconception about drug use at The Factory. "There were no drugs around The Factory," he says. "There were people that did drugs that came to The Factory, but they weren't doing drugs there. They were very into drug people at The Factory."

Of his own experiences there, he's similarly dismissive. "I was not involved with The Factory other than to work there," he says. "I was a separate entity — I never hung out with The Factory people. I didn't associate with them outside of working masses."

Maybe that's down to his feelings about the work they were doing. Movies like *Ghislaine*, *Lust for Candy* and the unfinished *San Diego Sue*, which is now considered key artifacts of American junk art culture. Joe describes as "fakeness." It's typical of his antipathy towards his work. On the one hand he'll claim that, "I never had a dream to become an actor — I was just someone who happened by a place where they were shooting a film." And yet he's clearly rankled by the idea that his career should be defined by a handful of cheap movies he made with Andy Warhol, when he went on to make another 40 films and counting.

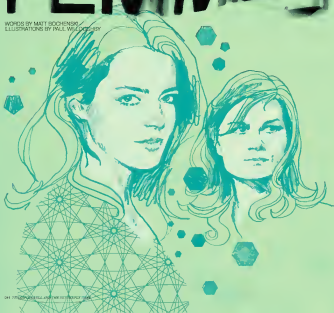
Joe's feelings about Warhol himself echo that ambivalence. He's got no love for the image of Warhol in any *Factory Girl*, which sees the artist as a callous manipulator. "He was very kind and considerate to a lot of people," he says, "he wasn't cruel at all." So how do you explain the story that when Francis Ford Coppola was considering Joe for the role of Michael Corleone in *The Godfather*, both Warhol and Morrissey shot him down by telling Coppola that Joe was a drug addict who was incapable of working from a script? "They had nothing good to say about me," he agrees, but that's all he'll offer.

He finally loses it over the suggestion that he had a falling out with The Factory over money. "You keep telling me what I've said. We never had a falling out over money! Nowhere in the world have I ever said I had a falling out over money! Only that's not quite true. He once told an interviewer from *Index* magazine that, "Paul Morrissey fucked me over for close to 10 years. Paul would deny even in front of me, that I didn't get a percentage from the films we made together. So I put him out of my life for six or seven years." The official line now is that he left The Factory simply because it was time to move on.

He might not be an easy going soul, but there's actually something glorious about Joe Dallesandro's anger. To the outside world The Factory will always define his career, but that doesn't mean he has to let back and take it. Besides, he's got the kind of thick Brooklyn accent that's far more suited to poking a fight than discussing the artistic nature of Warhol's films. And if you think about it, how would you feel if every time somebody looked at you all they saw were the ways in which you're not the person you used to be? Maybe, you think, they even wish you'd died young, and that by living you're just spoiling everybody's perfect narrative of a bygone era. When you're known to the world as "Little Joe," it must be hard to grow old. ■

FUTURE FEMMES

WORDS BY MATT BOCHENSKI
ILLUSTRATIONS BY PAUL WILLIAMS FOR



FOR DECADES FRENCH FILM HAS BEEN DOMINATED BY THE SAME FEMALE FACES. NOW THE SPOTLIGHT IS TURNING ON A NEW GENERATION OF YOUNG ACTRESSES DEMANDING LIBERTY, EQUALITY AND SORORITY.

It was Catherine Breillat who said that the great difference between American and French cinema "is not in money or in scripts, but the inexplicably we have in renewing our actors." She's talking about the slow death of French cinema, where the new kids can't catch a break and the old birds just won't budge. France may have purged one embodiment, but the screen regime survives in Huppert, Besson, Beart, Adjani, Marais and their ilk, a royal court determined to keep the next generation of ladies in waiting. But all that may at last be about to change. We spoke to the future faces of France's onscreen females.

ROXANE MESQUIDA

(LEFT)

"I don't know if I have limbs," says Roxane Mesquida, which is quite the understatement from the actress and caused Catherine Breillat to admit, "I like to rape myself."

Deceptively innocent, sensual and amoralizing, Mesquida was only 18 years old when she starred in *A Ma Sœur*, Breillat's controversial tale of two sisters that ends in rape and murder. She returned for its spiraling sequel, *Romance*, and now director and star are reunited for *The Last Mistress* — a surprisingly chaste take on the world of Dangerous Liaisons.

Though not her first film, *A Ma Sœur* was both a coming-of-age and a baptism of fire. Not just for the nudge-nudge questions about how her Breillat pushed her ("I'm a fucking actress," she says, not an actress who fucked), but for the experience of filming itself. "The beginning was awful between her and me," she admits. "She was mean, and I cried every day. I told her that I need to feel like she loves me, because if I feel that, I can give her everything."

Breillat isn't popular in France (representatives from the industry flew to New York to ask them to make *A Ma Sœur* out of the city's film festival), and Mesquida's profile is still relatively low. Would she have a more intense Dix if she wasn't part of Breillat's aggressive assault on the establishment? "I don't care," she says. "If I could only work with Catherine all my life, I really wouldn't care."

But there's frustration simmering beneath the surface. "In France," she says, "there are no young actresses — we don't have roles for young people." What happened to the legacy of the New Wave? "If Anna Karina was born now," says Mesquida, "she couldn't work. Godard didn't care about age, but now, when you are young or pretty you can't work because you are not intellectual," and I hate that."

This year she moved to New York, enrolled in the film school and got an agent in L.A. "I don't care about French people," she says. "It'll be their loss if she doesn't come back."

MARINA HANDS

(RIGHT)

Marina Hands loves fish and chips. She loves HP sauce. She loves London. She hasn't "more in one year in England than in two years at the Conservatoire in Paris." That's the kind of shit that can get you deported.

In case you don't know, Marina Hands is only half-French. And in case you hadn't already guessed, that other half is English, courtesy of her dad, theatre director Terry Hands. Sometimes, she says, it feels like there's a war going on inside her, but it sounds more like a massacre. *Vietnam vers l'Anglais*.

Despite her background (mom was actress Lucienne Bataille), acting wasn't in the picture when she was younger. Her first love was show-jumping, and it was serious enough to see her make the French junior team before, as she puts it, "I failed." It was one of those brutal life-changing experiences. "I remember what it was like to have a dream and not succeed," she says. "I remember thinking, I should just do something else."

Something else was acting, where failure hasn't exactly followed. Now 32, Hands has worked with Guillaume Cœurst, won a César for her role in Lady Chatterley's Lover, and has a small but significant part in Julian Schweich's *The Dying Ball* and the *Batouli*.

But it hasn't been an easy ride. First of all there's an established system that everybody's fighting, a hypocrisy, she says, that's stifling French film. "We had a great French cinema, but since the TV channels have taken on the business, a TV thinking has been applied to films. Now, no one can afford to make a film without a star."

And once you've become the star? Money, not problems. "As you gain attention, you gain enemies," she says. "People think that if you're successful, you have this arrogance."

Maybe that arrogance is just a reluctance to sell out — Hands has no intention of going commercial ("The people who make the blockbusters wouldn't want me. They'd look at me and say, 'Oh, she thinks!'", and compromise isn't a route she's ready to take. "I don't show myself as acting because it was my parents' world," she says. Not any more if only. ▼

MARIE-JOSÉE CROZE

(LEFT)

Hing on a minute, though: not everybody believes that French cinema is fading to young. The way Marie-Josée Croze sees it, the young are taking French cinema. "The new generation is doing what they have to do," she says, "they do have parts. The thing is, every generation has to deal with the one that went before it. I grew up with Isabelle Adjani in the '70s, and the great actors of the '60s, and even though there's a new group of people today, I don't think we're as good as them. I'm more moved by that older generation, less by my generation, and maybe even less by the younger generation that's following me."

That's feeling talk, but it's understandable. In Hollywood, Croze would be taking her twilight years at 37, in France, the world is her oyster. After winning the Best Actress award at Cannes in 2003 for *The Birdman Invoices*, the French Canadian moved to Paris, and the job offers haven't stopped. Julien Schnabel is the latest in a long line to fall for her charms, casting her in the key role of Jean Gail's speech therapist Hervé in *The Diving Bell and the Butterfly*.

"With acting, you can also act in age," she says. "I can act a 20-year-old girl, or maybe not 20, but 25 definitely, and I can act a 45-year-old boy. And in my case, if I don't care about age, I think it's ridiculous. Age today doesn't mean anything."

Okay, but she would say that. It's Croze who's also comfortably into the shoes of the Brookes and Hupperts at the expense of the real 20-somethings sitting on the sidelines. We're not saying she doesn't deserve it, but that doesn't make it right. She might claim that society is "growing up" about the question of age, but her own career opportunities are proof that casting directors still won't willing to take a chance on youth.

No dice. Sciamma's "web generation" just don't cut the mustard. "It's a question of the way you live," she says. "The more you watch TV and live as a stupid person who has no real life, just living through the internet and sending e-mails, okay, well these are the actors you're going to get." Duck. Piers might be famous for its ruts, but it's a batch fight that's brewing.

CÉLINE SCIAMMA

(RIGHT)

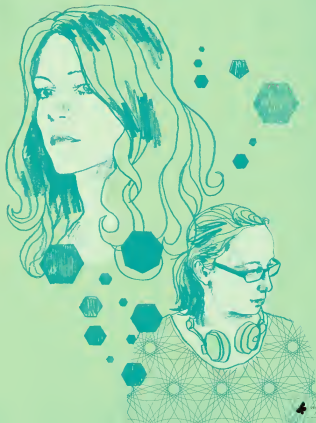
It's not just actresses who are elbowing the old guard out of the way. Céline Sciamma is a 27-year-old filmmaker whose first feature, *Water Lilies*, is an evocative depiction of young love that she describes as "the anti-Wege *Schwende*." Set among the unlikely world of synchronized swimming, it's a lyrical look at sensitive small-town courts, from a gay teenager falling for her best friend, to an overweight girl desperate to get laid.

It's ironic that a first-time director should be working with first-time actors on a film about the trauma of virginity. *Water Lilies* was Sciamma's graduation script, and she was set for shooting barely six months out of film school. "I had no time to ask myself about my legitimacy," she says, "because I just had to act on it. I was lucky because if I had two years to think about it, I would have been really scared."

Not everybody gets that kind of luck, but that's bullsh*t about the opportunities for young filmmakers. "We are the country that produces the most films with new directors in the world," she says. "A percentage of the money made from every film released in France goes to making new movies."

She recognizes that there are problems, though — ones that she might soon be in a position to solve. "I'm bored with the fact that the cast in French cinema is always the same," she admits. "I don't believe in fiction when they are there." But she sees a brighter future ahead. "We are the web generation, and we like change a lot. I like to discover new people, new faces — people from the streets." And she's confident that that she won't lose that energy, won't lose sight of what's important. After all, "I've been a director once," she says, "but an audience member a thousand times." ■

***Water Lilies* and *The Last Mistress* are released on March 14 and April 26 respectively, and will be reviewed in the next issue. Full transcripts of all these interviews are available online at www.filminkonline.co.uk**



SOLDIERS OF THE STEM CELL REVOLUTION

IF JEAN-DOMINIQUE BAUBY WAS BORN TODAY, IT'S UNLIKELY HE'D HAVE TO WORRY ABOUT LOCKED-IN SYNDROME. STAR TREK SCIENCE IS CHANGING THE FACE OF MODERN MEDICINE. BEAM US UP, BOYS.

There's a telltale tingle in your left arm and a crushing pain in your chest. You're having a heart attack. You've got about half an hour before you die. Fortunately for you, it's 2017 and you're well-armed with this: Wipe your brow, grip your springs, tighten the tourniquet, breathe a sigh of relief. Get the rescue potion brewed inside and do the rest of the work. Now carry on up the treadmill — hell, why not increase the resistance? Everything's okay now: laughter, babies, happiness, stronger. ▼

FIG I



FIG II



FIG III



FIG IV



THE ENVIRONMENTALIST'S NIGHTMARE AND THE SUBJECT OF COUNTLESS SCI-FI HORROR STORIES

In 10 to 15 years you're not going to recognize the landscape of modern technology. Everyone from electrical and chemical engineers to zoologists, synthetic biologists and nanotechnologyists are getting excited about the point in time where humanity becomes self-managed. Not simply scientists are on the brink of unlocking our potential to self-heal.

"Instead of giving you an aspirin for a headache, we're going to give you the drugs that will make your heart muscle regenerate," says Professor Eric Jarvis, lecturer in chemical engineering at the University of Waterloo, Canada. "Just like a salamander regrows its arms, there's no reason we can't do that with most of the tissue in our body." He sees a time when scores of remote biological cells will be let loose in our bloodstream and burrow into our veins, attacking pinpointed weak spots. Once there, they'll form a critical piece of us: anything from an artery to an organ right inside us. Inevitable surgery will be nothing but a memory and emergency health will look less like a casualty and more like a cure.

"Biology is fundamentally knowable," he adds. "There's no magic, it's not metaphysics. We will understand it given time." Think about what the world will look like when the record

numbers of 90-year-olds slow today's walkers in their 110th birthday as physically fit as they were in their prime.

But what of mental health? The same theory applies. As Dr Michael Whalley, dean of development at the North East England Skills Call Institute, Newcastle, explains, "Dementia comes in all flavours," but so do a dizzying array of potential drugs. "There are lots of stem cells to choose from in the body" to replace, "fix or fill in those could cure acute liver disease, diabetes or straightforward neurodegenerative diseases within five, 10 or 15 years."

Stem cells are the organic clay inside our skin. Scores of scientists around the globe are rearing, breeding, spruce and clone them, desperate to see who can be the first to fix us for good. In the future, we won't need X-rays or computers, let alone the humble syringe; they say the plan is to become self-generating. We'll be stitched up internally by our own fresh cells, not synthetics ones grown in a Petri dish. With an initial dose of "topographical" cells re-injected into our blood stream, they'll just keep on replenishing of their own accord. At Cambridge University, Dr Christopher Lacer at King's College is making "prosthetic skin" from raw electrodes plugged into a plant,

skin-like network. Eventually it will wrap around prosthetic limbs like a glove, and when hooked up to the nervous system will allow amputees to touch and feel again. The environmentalist's nightmare and the subject of countless sci-fi horror stories is becoming reality: it's getting more and more likely that we're going to live to be forever young.

These developments are as terrifying as they are enticing, but at least here in England they're regulated. Over in America, money talks. Ever since President Bush withdrew state funding for stem cell research in August 2001, private labs have been encouraged to play God in a lawless field. With no requirement to publish their findings, the lab cells are amenable to no one but their conscience. Professor Jarvis is reluctant to speculate what exactly they do (or don't) do only half-jokes at "being inspired by the GUT", but if something goes wrong – say inhibitors or escapes – we could all get seriously burnt. And get this: that's not right now so they're pressing an expedient.

Soon the merger of "wet" and "dry" science (where you take squinky stuff like biological life and add an various bits of hyper-tech like carbon nano wires) will surpass any Star Trek writer's wildest dreams. Helicopters will be

based on the anatomy of a fly's wing; most systems will react to warm (initially more efficient systems than computers), and cars, bikes, iPads, weapons – you name it – will learn how to heal themselves.

Of course, whether it's being cloned, about the revolution in genetic engineering was made a decade ago, when cloning was big. "Remember Dolly?" Just six years after she became the world's first cloned animal, she was dead. Two years later, the cloned puppy, Snuppy, arrived, but his life has been plagued by scandal after his owner, the South Korean professor Hwang Woo Suk, was discredited after much of his research – including claims to have cloned the world's first human embryo – was proved false.

Yet nothing stirred the hornet's nest quite like the recent news that the creator of Dolly was cutting cloning. Professor Ian Wilmut, director of the Centre for Regenerative Medicine at the University of Edinburgh, made his announcement after learning of new studies by Professor Jodie Thomson of the University of Wisconsin, and Professor Shengxi Xianzhen from Kyoto University. They've discovered how to reprogram adult skin cells to an embryonic-like state. In the whole spectrum of stem cell research, explains Professor Jones, "These two groups have demonstrated one of the Holy Grails, the ability to phenotypologically turn any cell into a stem cell." In effect, they've worked out how to turn back time.

Previously, cloned embryonic stem cells were seen as the great new hope. They are "blank slates" – blank slates with the potential to "differentiate", or turn into something useful. They offer the richest source of constantly replenishing cells ready to be multiplicated free of all the meddling – be it a liver cell or a piece of a heart valve. But they're tough to get hold of, requiring the destruction of a human embryo – the chair of life is, after all, precious – and how believe it should be tampered with. Then there's the problem of the high rejection rate.

Now that it's possible to reprogram mature cells back to pluripotency, we've got a steady clinical supply at hand (we shed our complete

body skin every fortnight, so we're well stocked) and, because they are taken from our own body, theoretically they shouldn't be rejected. "Cloning is dead", cried headlines all over the world.

Not everyone agrees. Dr Stephen Winger, senior lecturer and director of King's College Stem Cell Biology Laboratory, says, "I know Ian [Wilmut] gets well and I don't agree with his comments at all. I think he's wrong." It's a "major development", but, as yet, "it's kind of a sledgehammer approach," he says. It's messy and experimental, and at the moment the skin cells have to be mixed

with substances derived from FIV. These substances will remain dormant indefinitely. "They will always be there – it's a potential problem for their future use," says Dr Lyle Armstrong, lecturer at the Institute of Human Genetics at Newcastle University.

For the time being, if you want to live longer you're better off watching your weight and cutting down on the cigarettes. But as Professor Jones warns, "Once we understand how Mother Nature has evolved things over four and half billion years to be so damned efficient, we're going to start using her principles for everything." ■

IS BECOMING
REALITY: IT'S
GETTING MORE
AND MORE LIKELY
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TO LIVE TO BE
FOREVER YOUNG.

A L&L review will not be inhibited by any perceived rules, just as movies are about more than the two hours you spend sitting in the cinema, our reviews are a chance to talk about much more than the immediate experience of the film in question. There are many different aspects of the movie-going experience and we will embrace them all.

Anticipation

Ever waited six months for a box-office behemoth? Read a book that you loved and fervently watched the adaptation? Been pleasantly surprised by an off-the-radar independent? Anticipation plays a crucial role in your reaction to a movie. Rather than ignore it, we think it should be measured and acknowledged as part of the movie-going experience.

Marked out of 5

Enjoyment

All other things aside, how did you feel for those two hours? Were you glued to your seat? Did the film speak to your wall? Was it opening, long-lasting, or just plain boring? Were you even awake?

Marked out of 5

Life Retrospect

Don't movies live with you? You carry them around, where ever you go and the things they say shape the way you see the world. Did that movie hide away an aww every moment burned into your retina? Was it a quick fix screen flick, good for a rainy Sunday afternoon? Or the first day of the rest of your life? Did you kiss it with a fury only to fall in love with a passion? Or did that fire love flame away like a dream of romance?

Marked out of 5

CHAPTER FOUR

*in which we discuss
the latest film releases.*



THERE WILL BE BLOOD

THESE DAYS

THESE DAYS
THESE DAYS
THESE DAYS

From Jesse James

to the Coen's *No Country for Old Men* to this visceral tragedy, the relationship between man and the salt of US soil is both caustic and current. Hubris, greed, retribution and existentialism are the common themes of these new American epics, and as male characters sweat under the noonday sun, all three films exemplify the challenge and self-examination good cinema should provide.

There Will Be Blood is more political still. Its backbone is severed into the key constituents of the American psyche: oil – the path they'll go to war over; and religion – and boy, they go to battle over that one too.

In *1865* and *Daniel Day-Lewis* is the osman, Plinview, breaking bones to find the black

stuff, selling his soul and son to profit, charming parents into to relinquish their land. His competitive streak, like a poisoned fissure, ensures that regardless of his success, he will never be happy.

And Paul Dano. Eli, a both the schizophrenic preacher and healer, possessed with righteousness – utterly unflinching despite his morality – his maverick also all flawed narcissism and a quest for power. But ultimately the film belongs to one of them.

This is yet another staggering performance from Daniel Day-Lewis, and Paul Thomas Anderson gives him enough meat to masticate his way to further glory. *Plinview* is complex, dynamic, flawed,

demonic, attractive and at all times a magnet for the eyes. His emotion – pent up and snarling – bubbles like thick black... oil beneath the surface.

It does grab somewhat that here is an actor who now somehow 'grooves' films with his presence, and there are a few other issues that linger. The final confrontation between Plinview and Eli is pure melodrama, and though the denouement is supposed to be pathetic, it's a tough conclusion to two hours and 40 minutes. The soundtrack, for its part, jingles like a Hammer horror wind-chime. And there's the Paul/DL problem – see what you can make of it.

One is left wondering if this metaphorical attempt at exposing

the heart of contemporary America is as powerful and brilliant as the third version in *Syncope* – the last great film about oil. On balance, perhaps not. But it remains a film with great method, mettle and madness, and for that reason shouldn't be missed. **Letter Dyer**

Anticipation: the return of *no. 1* and *no. 2* – five

Enjoyment: subverting *epic* with *complex* performance *five*

In Retrospect: Will win over *warriors* before, though as a *corrupted* genre it's got *stiller* competition. *Three*



4 MONTHS, 3 WEEKS AND 2 DAYS

ROMANIA
1989
A FILM BY
CRISTIAN MUNGU
CASTING BY
JULIA DOLAN

THE
FILM
IS
NOW
ON
DVD

4 Months, 3 Weeks

and 2 Days is the story of university students Gabita (Laura Vasiliu) and Ottilie (Anamaria Marinca). Set during the dog days of Romania's communist regime, it follows these young women as Gabita undergoes an illegal abortion. Rather than make Gabita the focus, however, the story belongs to Ottilie, her calm, level-headed friend and confidante. With this single sleight of hand, director Cristian Mungiu makes the issue barely political in the truest sense — this is not a morality tale, but a grainy, roots urban legend, born out of communist cause and effect.

And yes, this is a subjective film: there's no love lost between Mungiu and the Romanian government, but rather than becoming a martyred rant, the film highlights universal social sicknesses. Oppression breeds opportunity for those capable — or intemperate enough — to grasp it, as witnessed by Vlad (Ivan Stancu), a truly terrifying performance as Domnu' Babu, the head abortionist. The man is not an over-the-top psycho, nor will he register your fear of the dark; he is, for the most part, a "normal" member of society. It's not until he renegotiates Gabita's "payment terms" in light of her

desperation that his true menace becomes clear.

Despite the film's challenges, there are moments of knowing humor. As Ottilie dines with her boyfriend's parents, the conversation turns to politics. Their squabbling is evidence of a generation completely detached from their children. Likewise, as Ottilie asks her berated boyfriend what he would do if she became pregnant, his smug reply of "I'd support you" is enough to make the red-soaked audience choke back sick laughter. The effect of these scenes is testimony to the fact that Mungiu has, without

warning, turned his audience into political activists. This may be a Romanian tale, but it's a subject for a global audience. **A-+**

Anticipation: A rare 40-or-so-minute abortion film. **B+**

Enjoyment: A haunting tale that stretches almost too close for comfort. **B+**

In retrospect: Evidence that, in Cristian Mungiu, a powerful new voice has arrived on the world stage. **A-**

LWLies talks to 4 Months, 3 Weeks and 2 Days director Cristian Mungiu.

LWLies: How has winning the Palme d'Or and reaching the top of the box so early affected you?

Mungiu: All of a sudden people consider that you are part of the elite. And you know, even people that knew you before all of a sudden have this confirmation that, wow, you're really good. But I don't know why. I don't like it when people congratulate me for getting the award. If they want to congratulate me for anything, it should be for the film.

LWLies: What can you do to make sure that people don't treat you differently?

Mungiu: What I'm trying to do is to speak to everybody that I'm just the same person, and to behave every day just like yesterday because I need this normal outlook of 'nothing much has changed'. Hopefully like this it'll be easier for me to just think anonymously about my next movie and don't feel this kind of pressure. But it's very strange all of a sudden when people look at you on the street.

LWLies: Is it accurate to talk about 'New Romanian Cinema' as it has been an old Romanian cinema with a cine?

Mungiu: Honestly, I don't think there is an answer. I think that we've had films that are good, but never the full of cinema, we haven't had, until this moment, a generation of people at a series of films which were worth being seen by people outside.

LWLies: Why did Czech and Hungarian and Soviet cinema find an artistic voice under communism, but Romanian cinema failed to do that?

Mungiu: There is what we were saying. We had that debate in the press of the period that, well, maybe this is not an art that is appealing for Romania - maybe we don't know what cinema is about and maybe we can't make cinema. The directors that were making films during that period had to fight against censorship in a certain way, so all the films in the late '80s became very interesting and metaphorical. Maybe there was a way of fighting the system, but the problem was that as soon as there was the fall of communism, those people realized that they can't make any other kinds of films.

LWLies: In 4 Months, where do you draw the line in terms of the way you see the camera? Is your complicity in the experience something that you have to be aware of?

Mungiu: In terms of camera work, what we were trying to do from the beginning was to deliver the film from the perspective of the main character, which is not to say from her point of view, but the perspective of what she was experiencing and what was inside her mind in that specific shot. And then there's something else, which came from the general decision that we don't want to do anything which is, like, free ourselves as filmmakers. We decided to drop everything which is superfluous - for example we never put in the film unless somebody goes in front of the camera, and I asked my cinematographer never to tilt to be somebody's face. It's important for you to imagine that there are things going on beside this story that I'm telling. *Mark Ruffalo*

Check out the full (unedited) transcript at www.4months3weeks2days.com



CLOSING THE RING

by **Chris Nash**

WHEN THE RING (Shirley MacLaine, 1999) opens, the young woman is sitting in a car, looking out the window.

Heartbreaking

romance against a wartime backdrop? Sounds like there are tear-jerking possibilities: young love torn apart, jealousy in the ranks, and rushing into a marriage you know won't last thanks to the possibility of being taken by the Japs.

Those are just some of the areas covered in Richard Attenborough's first film in nearly a decade. It opens in Malaga at a funeral where Ethel Ann Roberts (Shirley MacLaine) takes a big break while everyone else buses her husband. Meanwhile, in Belfast, a young boy discovers a gold ring and sets out to find the owner. The film jumps back and forth over half a century, from 1941 to 1991, as the origins of the ring and the reasons for Ethel's mysterious behavior are revealed.

As a love story *Closing the Ring* couldn't further romance or compassion because the cookie cutter characters are so unapologetically dull. And while non-linear storytelling may be in fashion right now with every flashback the

film's momentum is stalled, and instead of witnessing a great story unfold we're treated to 45 minutes of Mocha Barbra's "best" and "wonder" songs rings.

Thankfully the rest of the cast hold their end up. MacLaine is a picture of aptitude depression from the beginning, and newcomer Martin McCann is endearingly charming as the naive and dippy Irish boy whose discovery starts the saga. *Closing the Ring* has its moments, but it's hard to look past the desperate sentimentality and a performance from Barton that's more wooden than the Blue Peter-island set. www.20c.com

Anticipation—

MacLaine romance with Mocha Barbra's take, so thanks! See

Enjoyment: The story is actually good enough to make you sit. *Three*

In Retrospect: The pastures story with you, unfortunately the negatives do too. *See*



THE EDGE OF HEAVEN

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Fatih Akin's fifth

fiction feature is, he says, the second part of what we're free to call a trilogy. Where part one, *Head-On*, was about love, *The Edge of Heaven* is an exploration into the artlessness of death. The story begins in Germany where Ali (Tuncel Kurtiz), a lonely widower, asks prostitute Yeter (Farisat Kizil) to move in with him in return for a monthly wage. Ali's son Nejat (Baki Davrak) disapproves of the match, but soon grows fond of Yeter, whose unexpected death prompts him to begin a search for her daughter, Ayten (Nurgül Yeşilçay) in Turkey. It is at this point that the focus shifts to Ayten's story, delving

into the unfolding narrative coincidences and horror images that this entails.

Akin's film unravels as a beautifully paced meditation on loss and grief, but there is also a keenness in the way it weaves a strong sense of the gothic into what first appears a purely personal homework. Indeed *The Edge of Heaven* is born of a Turkish-German filmmaker who is eager to confront and investigate the ways in which the two nations converge on both a human and ideological level. Identity, nationalism, dogma and idealism are just some of the issues negotiated by Akin's ingeniously structured

storytelling, consistently explored with the sensitivity and delicacy that they demand.

The importance of cultural hybridity is richly embodied by the visual juxtapositions of Istanbul and Berlin, with the former figured as a vibrant, dizzying metropolis, while the latter takes on a somberness well suited to the solitude of widower Ali. Though Akin's Turkey is one of repression and bureaucracy – the antithesis of the apparent freedom of Germany – for all of the character's, and perhaps for Akin himself, there is a paradoxical romanticism of the country as an exotic place of escape and reconciliation. It is

certainly no accident that the film closes with a long, unbroken take of the idyllic Black Sea coast with a stillness that most viewers will be loath to derogate as the credits roll. **Dennis Palanski**

Anticipation. The critical success of Fatih Akin's work gives just cause for hated breath. **Few**

Enjoyment. An intelligent and perfectly structured piece of cinema. **Few**

In Retrospect: Still no part three. **Few**



CHARLIE WILSON'S WAR

Tom Hanks

CHARLIE WILSON
AND MIKE NICHOLS
WINNER: Best Picture
NOMINEE: Best Actor, Best
Director, Best Screenplay

Among the plethora

of films about the strongest of beasts, American politics, this is the best. And for those lamenting the loss of *The Weir King*, Charlie Wilson's War is news from heaven.

Written by Aaron Sorkin, the complexity, wit and long tracking shots return like loved ones you've sorely missed. What he gets that is so damn rare, is that politics is fierce, and making your audience laugh doesn't stop them getting the point; in fact, it enhances the poignancy far more than being whisked in the face with some hefty message.

Texas congressman Charlie Wilson (Tom Hanks) has a saying:

"You can teach them to type but you can't teach them to grow tits." This is a man who negotiates with his cowboy boots on the table. A man who craves the political underbelly—drugs, hookers, arms dealing—and yet remains intrinsically likable. He's the perfect choice when rich bitch-Joanne Herring (Julia Roberts) decides she needs a guy to end the Cold War. How? Generate a covert op in Afghanistan, arm the Mujahideen and shoot down Soviets.

Their superb performances, and yet another smart turn by Philip Seymour Hoffman as a CIA agent, have to be credited to director Mike Nichols, who wings

all possible potential out of both actors and material. Most of all, he's never patronising: if you're not listening you'll lose the plot, and it's up to you to piece together the degree of irony intended when he cuts from a helicopter mandatory to Amy Adams' type begging through the White House.

Here's a film that shows the US doing what it does best, illicitly funding a war, winning it and then failing to rebuild the infrastructure. But while that should ring bells, more emboldened is the message about Reds under beds—the Soviets are the cut and dry bad guy and that's a rather startling oversimplification. What is crystal

clear, however, is that this is filmmaking at its best—exciting, intelligent and impeccably performed. Not bad for a true story. *Letter: Haynes*

Anticipation Who is Charlie Wilson? And aren't Julia Roberts and Tom Hanks too old for Oscar? Yes.

Enjoyment None fun than anything else in the multiplex. *Four*

In retrospect You'll want everyone to see it, get it and love it. Like you do. *Five*



BE KIND REWIND

Michel Gondry is sat

at his desk, sifting through a pile of scripts. Some are good, some are bad, and then—yes, here it is—I can make things from cardboard and wicker and socks in the one—sign me up!

In *Be Kind Rewind*, endearingly odd school Mr. Fletcher (Denny Glover) runs an equally odd school video rental store. Mike (Mike Del'is) is his endearingly incompetent assistant, and Jerry (Jack Black) is Mike's endearingly insane buddy. It's a set-up you couldn't fail to see: When Mr. Fletcher decides to take some time out, he leaves Mike in charge of the store. Unfortunately, Jerry

then gets busy breaking into the local power plant, becoming electro-magnetized, walking back into the store and wiping all the tapes.

Frustrated by hapless gusto, Mike and Jerry set about making their own homemade versions of everything from *Ghostbusters* to *Robocop* via *Driving Miss Gray*. Here, Gondry's creative juices kick in, and we are a-go. *Be Kind* evolves into a bizarre trip down memory lane as the two friends splice together their 16 homages and try to pass them off as the real thing. And what do you know, the neighbours love them, and they become local celebrities.

It makes no sense—but it's brilliant and funny. From Mos Def's leekademical charms to the earnest sweetness of sorts, kinds love interest Alma (Melanie Lynskey), the performances are excellent. Unsurprisingly, though, it's the infectious energy of Jack Black that ends up pretty much owning the show.

Be Kind Rewind is like the spirit of the '80s, rebels and cut loose, free-wheeling around with a video camera trying desperately to save itself. It's not totally random but it totally doesn't matter. Mr. Fletcher's store is going to be demolished! They must make more movies, enlist the neighbours and unite

the local community!

The heart lacking in Gondry's *The Science Of Sleep* resurfaces itself here with the kind of all-encompassing thump-thump-thump that will leave you feeling warm as hell. If you're into movies that suck, then this is not the film for you. **Denny Miller**

Anticipation: Snowy, frosty stick, neck black, snowed—goal! **Four**

Enjoyment: It's got heart—lots of heart. **Four**

In Retrospect: But it won't change your life. **Three**

WALK HARD: THE DEWEY COX STORY

THE
DEWEY
COX
STORY

Directed by John Dahl
Starring Judd Apatow, Paul Rudd, Jack Black, John C. Reilly, and Judd Apatow

It's fairly unusual for

a screenwriter to be the driving force behind a film's reputation, but that's exactly the case with *Walk Hard: The Dewey Cox Story*. From the guy who brought you *Knocked Up* and *Superbad*, the poster boy, without bothering to mention the peer schlock's name. No wonder the scribbles are striking.

The neglected monster is Judd Apatow — writer, producer and undisputed king of comedy, for the time being at least. Apatow and his chums have been swiftly rising the bar for the genre with a succession of excellent efforts. And therein lies the problem with *Walk Hard*. This latest project is not bad — in fact,

it's frequently very funny. But as a parody of music biopics, with the satire aimed squarely at *Walk the Line*, one can't help but feel disappointed at its lack of ambition.

John C. Reilly plays the agonizing Dewey, a nondescript country boy who discovers the Blues after the violent death of his brother. The first half-hour snipes at genre conventions with relentless silliness. Cox learns the guitar in less than a minute, and after getting hitched he wife starts pumping out kids at a comparable speed. After that we're off on the road as our hero discovers the joys of a career in music — which here translates to a lot of drugs,



knob jokes and a gloriously over-the-top impression of the Beatles, with Paul Rudd and Jack Black as Lennon and McCartney.

It's endearingly daft, provided that you're open to its punnier antics. What if you're not, however, is make you think or feel — but then maybe we're just being spoiled after the resplendent quality of recent hits. It's a single sketch stretched to 90 minutes,

but if you're in the mood for a helping of witful stupidity, you could do far worse. **See It, Rate It**

Anticipation. Build it up, strike again? **Four**

Enjoyment. He, how many words like 'Gee' and 'Time'?

In Retrospect. Still, he forgets quickly. **Two**



DEFENDER



BY APTOW

www.walkhard.com



NO COUNTRY FOR OLD MEN

Costner's
delicious, downbeat
Quentin Tarantino
remake is a
great, great
movie

by
David Karger

"It's a mess, ain't it sheriff?" says Deputy Wendell (Garret Dillahunt), staring at the five bullet-ridden corpses, four trashed pick-up trucks and one dead dog that are strewn across the patch of desert scrub. The sheriff, Ed Bell (Tommy Lee Jones), looks off camera and sighs, "Well, if it ain't, it'll do till the mess gets here."

It's the sort of exchange, early in the first act of the western noir *No Country for Old Men* that reminds you why the Coen brothers—the film's writers, directors, producers and editors—are among the smartest and most skilled filmmakers of their generation. For a low-temper, throwaway line, the scene manages to set up a character (Wendell is fearful; Bell is laconic), provide light relief from the previous high-tension chase

sequence, deploy an effortlessly authentic grasp of western vernacular and dreamlessly prefigure the genuine "mess" that is only moments away from engulfing everyone involved.

In this, the Coens' first movie since their 2004 comedy flop *The Ladykillers*, and thus a poignant return to form, the mess usually comes in the shape of Javier Bardem's psychopathic assassin Anton Chigurh (he is, as one character hints, only slightly less dangerous than *Saboteur* piggy). Top of Chigurh's hit list is Llewellyn Moss (Josh Brinker), a taciturn army vet who has stumbled, in typical movie fashion, across the aforementioned scene of bullet-ridden carnage—and is now in possession of \$2 million of lightly cowled mob money. Thus, the rest of the film, an adaptation of Cormac McCarthy's bestselling

novel, is a breakneck chase of sorts as Chigurh—armed to the teeth with shotguns, knives and even a slaughterhouse bolt gun, pursue the resilient Moss across the East Texas landscape (actual location: New Mexico).

And yet, even here, just as the movie is beginning to conform to genre expectations (like *The Assassination of Jesse James: the Coward's Story*), the Coens have the guts, and indeed the smarts, to pull it in an entirely different direction. Thus a key character is murdered off camera; the pace slows nicely; and with the aid of some impeccable turn from Jones and even Kelly Macdonald (as Moss' wife, going for most unselfconscious performance since *Thelma & Louise*) the movie becomes a breathtaking (insert for a time when the old men of the title weren't out-gunned and,

as Bell says, "out-matched") by the stereotypical killers of today's criminal class. It ends suddenly, perhaps too soon for some. But then, as the Coens clearly know, you can have too much of a good thing. **Kevin Maher**

Anticipation The Coens? Going on second. Even their would-be son, not to be argued. **Two**

Enjoyment An immaculate killing machine with a conscience on five shotguns? It's like *Die Hard* meets *Lawrence of Arabia*, but with decent dialogue! **Five**

In retrospect If it's not a revelation as cinema, it'll be until the revelation gets here. **Four**

Stone cold killer: LWLies is granted an audience with Javier Bardem. Be afraid...

LWLies: *Arban Chiguri in No Country for Old Men is very different from any of your previous roles. Was that a challenge?*

Bardem: Totally. The challenge was to try to embody something that is more of an icon than a human being. You have to bring something that is really fictional into a physical language so people can relate to it. Where the other characters are normal human beings, mine was an icon of what violence represents.

LWLies: You've spoken before of the 'superheroes' of America, Hollywood and the studio system. How important a mark of recognition, then, was the award nomination for Julian Schnabel's *Before Night Falls* in 2000?

Bardem: So are all American movies... Everything is surrounded by the same things, the same East End, and the cinema in the same. That said, in the American market there are great directors. You just try to work with the ones that are good, or you think are more close to what you would like to see on screen. As for the recognition for *Before Night Falls*, well, that was basic for me to be considered for some of the roles afterwards.

LWLies: How do you feel about the possibility of becoming a Hollywood leading man?

Bardem: Well, I don't see myself like that. What is basically the first American movie that I've done - I mean, this is really American. How do I see myself? I'm lucky. If they give you the chance, you have to break your back because there are many actors out there that can do it much better than you, but they choose you for whatever reason. But I remember myself like some person that I was seven years ago, working in Spain.

LWLies: Is it important to you to maintain some sense of a national identity as an actor, and remain 'local' to Spanish cinema?

Bardem: Yes, but it's not something that has to do with the flag. It has to do with an education, a culture, an audience, something that you are comfortable with because you know exactly every kind of little detail, then you're talking about when you're acting. It doesn't have to do with paying any debt to any country.

LWLies: What are the challenges of working in English?

Bardem: It's the difference between a hotel room and your room. When you are staying in a hotel room and you are getting used to it, after a week you can come in with the lights off, and you know where certain things are so you don't hit the furniture, but there will be places in that room that you won't ever reach, and that you'll never think of. You don't belong to them; they don't belong to you. That's the language. You speak, you try to manage the language, you use the language, there's a moment when you move or learn feel comfortable, but there are certain points that you're not ever going to reach because at the end of the day, with experience, you haven't been able to live or feel in that language. Emma Watson

Check out the full transcript at www.30secondsof.com



BLACK WATER

Directed by
Chris Smith
Starring Javier Bardem, Emma Watson, Jesse Plemons, and
Jesse Plemons

TRAILER

You can tell from the get go that *Black Water* is going to be a well-conceived but badly executed thriller. It has superbore keywords: *The Blair Witch Project* and *Jaws*, but the kind of execution that is more *The Blair Witch Project* meets *Piranha*. Grace (Emma Watson), her boyfriend Adrian (Jesse Plemons) and her little sister Lee (Maeve Dermody) decide to take a river tour while on holiday. After drifting into a mangrove swamp their boat is capsized and they soon realise they've been attacked by a crocodile.

As the onslaught of XXXX drinking, casual swearing and Steve Irwin look-a-like tour guide suggest, *Black Water* is set in Northern Australia where, according to the opening shot, croc attacks are a regular occurrence. Even so, the hardly warrants the 'based on a true story' tag pinned to the film.

With a plot focused almost entirely on the survival of only

three characters, it's not a big ask for *Black Water* to sustain the tension for a tight 90 minutes. But although the footage of real crocs is an effective choice by co-directors David Nerlich and Andrew Truscott, and the first attack puts the film to bed, it doesn't leave you on tenterhooks for very long.

The tension quickly dissolves as hunter and hunted play a game of peek-a-boo that turns into a carnival force about as scary as a bush barker trail. Don't bother watching a film that's essentially *Jaws* with a crocodile, just watch *Jaws* instead. *Unrated*

Anticipation: crocodile plot, capped best equals good time. *Three*

Enjoyment: not as good as that bit in *Greaseville* *Two*

In Retrospect: a wasted opportunity. *Two*



**BEFORE THE
DEVIL KNOWS
YOU'RE DEAD**

Philip Seymour Hoffman

**AL PACINO AND
PHILIP SEYMOUR
HOFFMAN IN
BEFORE THE DEVIL
KNOWS YOU'RE DEAD**

Philip Seymour

Hoffman is having sex with Maria Toner. He's taking her from behind. This is the opening to *Before the Devil Knows You're Dead*, and depending on your proclivities, it's either embarrassing, arousing, or something between the two.

Whatever your reaction, it's certainly a provocative way for Lumet to grab the attention. And while the scene of passion offers a short-lived moment of tenderness in a film dominated by trauma, it also hints at the stark delivery of the drama that is about to unfold.

It begins with sex, but it kicks off with a robbery. It should be simple, but it's not. It's awkward, disturbing and thoroughly messy—a force that

collapses into a horror show of blood and broken glass. But this is just the first in a series of awful events that will blight the lives of brothers Andy and Hank (Hoffman and Ethan Hawke) along with their fractious father, Charles (Albert Finney).

Andy, the older of the siblings, is a jerkwad and a troublemaker. As the brains behind the bad idea "[T]hey let's rob the jewelry store!," he bears the brunt of our condemnation. As time wears on, Andy reveals himself to be even more of a monstrous parasite than first imagined—a superlative turn from Hoffman can render him human, but never humane.

Hank, on the other hand, is pathetic. A drunken failure haunted by his ex-wife, his participation in

the carnival of cock-ups is propelled by despair rather than greed. While he's hardly hero material, Hawke's herdog demeanor is and enough to garner something approaching sympathy, in a decent performance from an actor who doesn't always shine.

Lumet's relatively low-key direction allows them both to make the most of their roles, so voices belaying drives the plot forward. Not since *Fargo* has a film so effectively portrayed a crime snowballing out of control, and while the brothers' descent eventually teeters on the edge of credibility, there's a vital lesson of truth that somehow cuts through the melodrama. Sidney Lumet knows human nature, and it shows.

Okay so this is bleak stuff. Yet there's something oddly satisfying about the lives of others going down the toilet and when the toilet is this well-made it's hard to complain. There aren't many chuckles, but this is high-caliber tragedy from a veteran of the art. **—Ken Kato**

ANTICIPATION. *James* is always worthy of your time and attention. **—Pete**

Enjoyment. *James* is always worthy of your time and attention. **—Pete**

IN RETROSPECT. **A** James is always worthy of your time and attention. **—Pete**

BACK TO NORMANDY

DIRECTED BY
Nicolas Philibert
(*Les Choristes*)

PG-13
Some Material May Be Inappropriate for Children Under 13

A record of eight

films in 30 years suggests that Nicolas Philibert can't wait to rush into a project unless he really feels it, so it's no surprise that *Back to Normandy* is a profoundly personal experience.

In 1978, Philibert was assistant director on René Allio's *Moi, Pierre Rivière, a well-regarded, if little seen, story about French peasant Pierre Rivière who, in 1855, murdered his mother, brother and sister then wrote a lengthy confession before committing suicide.*

Allio and Philibert shot on location in rural Normandy, casting farmers and villagers from the places where Rivière lived and died. And it's to these people that Philibert has returned 30 years later, partly out of a sense of cinematic attachment, but also to see what kind of legacy the film left behind.

What begins as a whimsical journey, however, gradually becomes a kind of quirky pilgrimage. On the one hand, it is the search for the elusive Claude Philibert, who played Pierre to great acclaim, only to disappear to fame beckoned. But more than that, *Back to Normandy* is a subtle and engaging attempt to understand the relationship between filmmaker and community.

As they become more comfortable around the camera, the villagers reveal heart-breaking stories of personal tragedy, or share simple details of their everyday lives. It's in these moments that Philibert achieves a quiet profundity, leading you to confront the notion of what happens after the camera has packed up and moved on.



With its fade-to-black and end credits, cinema is harshly differentiated in people after they have served their purpose. Allio's film lives on in the memory of the community forever, and yet beyond the limits of the camera's gaze they have continued to live their lives unnoticed. By questioning the responsibility that filmmakers owe to their subjects, Philibert's film becomes more, much more, than just a trip down memory lane. **Matt Richerson**

Anticipation: *Back to Normandy?* Who knew we'd even been in the first place? **Two**

Enjoyment: A gentle, peering and absorbing documentary. **Three**

In Retrospect: A rare knock, may well have you thinking about the nature of cinema. **At Least Four**

EL VIOLIN

DIRECTED BY
Francisco Vargas
(*El Violin*)
PG-13
Some Material May Be Inappropriate for Children Under 13

PG-13
Some Material May Be Inappropriate for Children Under 13

Selected for the Un

Certain Regard section of the 2008 Cannes Film Festival, *El Violin* marks the astonishingly assured debut feature of Francisco Vargas. The decision to expand an earlier short into this almost unbearably affecting meditation on tragedy and brutality seems inspired.

Elderly Don Plutarco (Angel Tzuc), his son Genero (Gerardo Tzuc) and grandson Lucio (Memo Gumbel) are humble rural musicians who also support the armed campesino peasant guerrilla movement. When the military seizes their village, the inhabitants flee, leaving destruction behind. Playing on his appearance as a harmless violin player to secure the trust of a vain captain (Diego Bertrán)

Genero who fancies himself as a musician, old Don Plutarco has a plan to recover the ammunition through chicanery and steady nerves.

For all that it is directed, written and produced by Vargas, *El Violin* is anchored on the amazing central performance of Tzuc. Born in 1924, Tzuc, who descends from a line of traditional musicians, began playing the violin aged six, and rose to the top of his field despite losing his right hand in a tragic accident. Though involved with Vargas in the making of the documentary *Tzuc's Concerto*, *El Violin* represents Tzuc's first acting role. Giving a naturalistic and subtle performance that beautifully interplays with the



veteran Genero to evoke the struggle between peasants and government and between duty and pleasure, the octogenarian was rewarded with a richly deserved Best Actor prize at Cannes.

Don't be put off by the fact that its UK release has been inexplicably delayed: this is a humane work that offers an intelligent and rigorously unflinching account of oppression and resistance. It deserves to be embraced. **Joan Wood**

Anticipation: Vargas has been tipped on the way to keep the Mexican cineaste scene going. **Three**

Enjoyment: Magnificently juggling beauty and brutality, this is a profound and lyrical work. **Four**

In Retrospect: A gem of a film ripe for discovery. **Four**



LUST CAUTION

Wong Chai Chin
Produced by
Ang Lee and
Tony Lee

Ang Lee
Director

Ang Lee's Lust,

Caution is like a bespoke-tailored City slicker: everything is measured and polished — James Schamus' screenplay is a model of sophistication, the performances of Tony Leung and newcomer Tang Wei are impassioned and intelligent, while production designer Lee Pui has created a compelling vision of occupied China — but despite all that, deep down you just can't trust it.

Shanghai, 1942: The Japanese are working with a collaborationist government in occupied China. An underground resistance has mobilized, and in its sights is the commander of the secret police. Mr. Yee (Leung) Yee lives in a closely guarded compound with round-the-clock

protection, but he has one weakness, a woman with whom he fell in love four years before in Hong Kong. That woman is Wong Chai Chin (Wei), now a fully-fledged member of the resistance tasked with bringing Lee into the open by any means necessary.

Cutting between occupied Shanghai and pre-war Hong Kong, between the dual identities of Wong Chai Chin, between youth and experience, between hope and futility between violence and love, Ang Lee constructs a crystalline tale of polished brilliance. Like the diamond that Yee bathes for his lover, it's a film with a multi-faceted surface. It is, in its own way, a more powerful rendering of our current troubles than any liberal hand-wringing asking tough questions

about occupation, violence and freedom. It is also a provocative sexual thriller — a grown-up *Black Book* which replaces that film's smutty good fun with a high-mindedness that is, nevertheless, far from cautious about Yee and Wong's steamy sex life.

By any measurable standard, Ang Lee has produced another epic. And yet something about *Lust, Caution* strikes in the throat. It oozes good taste, the kind that convinces people they're watching quality world cinema when its Hollywood sugar coating is designed to keep them from ever experiencing the real thing. It's all intellect and no emotion, and has the strophem of an outright bore — helplessly teased still and stale. It lacks the tough edges that give a picture

personality and for all its bedroom heat, it's a film that's in the end a little more warmth. **Matt Kohnen**

Anticipation. Two could make a convincing argument that Ang Lee is the best director in the world. **Four**

Enjoyment. Full marks for artistic merit, but not for emotional content. **Three**

In Retrospect: At the very least it will force you to think long and hard about why a film with so few visuals from Lee isn't a much better experience. **Three**

Lust, Caution writer and super producer James Schamus talks politics, Iraq and the misunderstood genius of *Hulk*. No, really.

LW: You adapted the screenplay from Eileen Chang's short story. It's such a specifically Oriental story in such an Oriental setting, what did you bring to the screenplay that was uniquely your own?

Schamus: Pretty much everything that wasn't Oriental. The story and her style of writing are so precise that it gives you an aspect emotionally as to what you have to do to make the translation to the screen. Eileen Chang was a screenwriter, she wrote with cinema, and so inside what motivates that story is a tremendous cinematic sensibility.

LW: You make no apologies for how convoluted the history is, but it's not easy to follow. Were you under pressure to dilute that?

Schamus: Once you get through that very brief confusion these things do simplify themselves. Let's say that the Japanese oppressors and the collaborators who work with them are 'bad', and the idealistic young people who are trying to assassinate them are 'good' — at least that's the set-up. What's confusing is all the emotions that come with the process by which our heroes become involved with their collaborators when you're in really confusing territory.

LW: Are you finding that people are trying to pin a Baghdad/Iraq scenario on top of what you've done?

Schamus: You'd be surprised by how few here, at least in the States, but that's because people are almost blind to the connection. Certainly Ang and myself more than that it was a contemporary movie in so many ways: you're seeing a politician in that oppression and what desperation and what disillusionism can do to people.

LW: You produced *Buffalo Soldiers* back in 2001, which says quite specifically that some of the guys in the US Army are total chits. Could you make that film in today's climate?

Schamus: I screened *Buffalo Soldiers* at the Toronto Film Festival, and said it on the night of September 10, 2001. Within about 15 hours of claiming that deal the film's value had disappeared. It just goes to show you what can happen in a single instant. So I stand by everything the film has to say and the way it says it? Absolutely, and I think what's interesting so many years later is what's happening with *Blackwater* and *Abu Ghraib*. I think that the picture is a little bit more complicated than *Boys n the Bar* led us to believe.

LW: After making the likes of *Breakfast Mountain* and *Lust, Caution*, the big question is what the hell was going on with *Hulk*? Why did Ang Lee do it, and do you regret it in retrospect?

Schamus: No, not at all. If you are looking at movies politically, to have a movie as a mainstream movie where a guy created by the American military is battling the American military in the desert while *Wetlands* Ang is singing Arabic reflective music on the soundtrack — if some people can't get it, too bad for them. *Wetlands*!

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JUNO



"Your parents are

probably wondering where you are," suggests Vanessa Loring (pre- and post-pregnant Jennifer Garner) to heavily pregnant teenager Juno MacGuff (Ellen Page). "Nuh," says Juno. "I mean, I'm already pregnant, so what other kind of shenanigans could I get into?"

Then just about sums up the fast-talking, wisecracking, scarily mature teenager that is Juno, the star of Jason Reitman's hugely engaging comedy about growing up...and the bumps that come along the way.

After getting knocked up by the lanky (and Peewee Blasker [Michael Cera]) Juno checks the "Genuinely Seeking Spouse" section of the weekly *Penny Saver* to find a couple who want to adopt. Enter Vanessa

and Mark Loring (Jason Bateman), who are desperate for a child. But while Juno is taking the entire situation in her stride, she swiftly discovers that no matter how much you think you're in control, nothing in life ever really goes to plan.

Thanks to blogger-turned-screenwriter Diablo Cody, Juno sports a razor-sharp script, with quotable one-liners all over the place. And although the dialogue is occasionally a little too self-conscious—a bit too sunny to be believable—the outstanding performance of Page papers over any would-be cracks. With her acerbic and curiously self-effortlessly temperate Juno's cocksure high-school precociousness with the confusion of a teenager out of her depth.

Reitman has already proved himself adept at dealing with hot subjects, humorously tackling the tobacco industry in *Thank You for Smoking*. And while teenage pregnancy isn't your standard comic relief, it works because Juno broaches the subject with humility and an honest eye.

But where the film truly excels is in its depiction of Juno's relationship with Blasker. It's here that the witty retorts and Cera's stunner get stripped away and Page plays it brilliantly. It's at her most thoughtful (and her most quotable) that she shines.

With a talented ensemble cast, rich direction and a crackling soundtrack to boot, Juno is more than just your average coming-of-age comedy. But it's Ellen Page's

shine, and for good reason, as she shows an almost intimidating amount of talent for a 20-year-old. We're going to be seeing a lot more of this lady when *awake*.

Anticipation. A wisecracking pregnant teenager from the guy that bought us *Thank You for Smoking* should be interesting. *B+*

Enjoyment. Ellen Page as someone as then refreshingly growing-up teen comedy. *A-*

In Retrospect. Funny and moving with quotable one-liners and a heart of gold. *A-*

DAN IN REAL LIFE

Best Original Song
"Dan in Real Life"
— Dan Aykroyd
Best Comedy

COMEDY
R

'Plan to be surprised!'

cups the trailer to Peter Hedges' latest slice-of-life comedy — with perhaps a tad more irony than Hollywood intended.

Surprise there are plenty in the predictable tale of love-at-first sight. Obvious plotlines and straightforward characters, however: there are aplenty in a film that shows none of the subtlety of Hedges' previous forays into writing and directing (*Places of Their Own*, *What's Eating Gilbert Grape*).

Steve Carell plays Dan Burns, a divorced father-of-three stuck in the safety of his non-gay ways when a chance encounter with

a lovely stranger (Juliette Binoche) jolts him from his mountain of self-loathing. Dan rushes to share the news with his ridiculously large family, gathered at their ridiculously cozy Rhode Island home for an all-American annual vacation. But guess what? She's already there — and she's dating his brother (Dane Cook).

With transparent dialogue and one-dimensional characters, there's little imagination and even less soul on display throughout most of the film. Perhaps it's not exactly shooting for laugh-out-loud funny, but as its quieter moments are overshadowed by slapstick banter, it ends up occupying an uneasy middle



ground between comedy and sentimentality that isn't going to please anybody. At least indie jazz hero Sonnie Lux has a monopoly on the soundtrack. **Average** **Carell**

Enjoyment: Less annoying than the American version of the office, less captivating than *Little Miss Sunshine*. **Three**

Anticipation: Steve Carell's career has been hitting major turndowns. **One**

In Retrospect: Easily digestible fare that promises to never repeat on you. **Two**

AZUR & ASMAR: THE PRINCES' QUEST

Best Animated Film
"Azur & Asmar: The Princes' Quest"
— Studio Ghibli

ANIMATION
R

This gleefully

idiosyncratic animated work comes from Michel Ocelot, the French polymath who has managed to carve a niche in Europe with his series of hand-drawn films charting the wayward exploits of Kikou, a talking African babby with a finely honed moral compass.

Azur & Asmar tells the story of a Gaudi-influenced house named Azur who is brought up by an Arabic nanny alongside her young son, Asmar, in what looks like eighteenth-century France. The boys fight, play and argue like brothers, until they are parted, only to reunite later in medieval Maghreb, both in search of the magical djinn fairy about whom their nanny would tell them stories as tots.

Stylistically, Ocelot mixes the whimsical fantasy of early Disney with the finely-rendered digital realism of the boys down at Pixar to produce a visual counterforce that is at once fanciful and otherworldly, but remains markedly 'real' all the while. The writer/director/producer has stated that his interests lie more with decorative art, ancient architecture and early delights than with the conventional cinematic craft, and this becomes glaringly obvious as we are lavished with gorgeous, intricately patterned walls, majestic buildings and myriad local legends.

Where the film fails is in its daisy-chain narrative, which is a bit too convoluted in structure (almost as if the film is little more



than a long treasure hunt) to leave much of a lasting impression beyond the cherns doors. Also, the visual style is perhaps a bit po-faced and self-consciously enchanting to truly leave the little 'uns feeling fully engaged. That said, a moderately successful attempt to offset the air of solemnity with comic sidekick Orpoux comes as welcome relief. **Awes** **Springer**

Anticipation: Alternative animated epic that isn't *Pink Panther* or *Dracula*. **Murray** **Three**

Enjoyment: Sparkling, witty and visually lush. **Three**

In Retrospect: Was kids with a bit more magic. **Three**



THINGS WE LOST IN THE FIRE

WATCHING *THINGS WE LOST IN THE FIRE* IS LIKE WATCHING A MAN OF LETTERS RECOVER HIS VOICE.

BY JEFF LABRECQUE

Contrary to first

impressions, this slow-burning two-hour melodrama isn't based on a best-selling beneficiary of Oprah's Book Club, but it certainly begins like a badly-adapted novel. In fact, this tear-jerking ode to family life is the result of an original screenplay by Allen Loeb, no most of the blame for its early woes must be aimed at the dizzying jump cuts of Danish director Susanne Bier, as she tries to cover around 35 years of back story in the film's first 15 minutes.

David Duchovny plays smart, sophisticated architect Brian, the perfect father to two adorable kids, and ideal husband to

impossibly beautiful stay-at-home mum, Audrey (Halle Berry). However, when you see father and son sharing a tender moment at their neighbor's swimming pool ("What does fluorescent mean, dad?") "Uh from within, son." "Like me?" "Like you." "You know that tragedy in nine minutes away."

Things then take a turn for the lanky when, in a deft act of self-flagellation, Audrey makes plans to boyfriend Brian's childhood friend, Jerry (Benicio Del Toro). Jerry's a former lawyer turned baggie-eyed snick addict whom she's loved for decades, but he's also a unique link to the past that has been so unfairly wrenched from her. Audrey rocks

up at his dog house, then at the hospital where he works as a janitor, and then, in what seems like self-punishment of the most sordid kind, asks him to move in with her. She even crawls up to him at night and begs him to hold her "like Brian did" until she falls asleep.

Their mess-up relationship stretches the bounds of sense—it would a straight-laced, middle-class mum really let a string-out junkie live with her two young kids? But the cast work hard to ground the suburban fairy-tale in reality. A bonafide turn from Del Toro sets this guilty tale apart from lesser melodramas, while Halle Berry's

tear and muscle ducts earn their fat star salary. **Grade: B-plus**

Anticipation One cold stare of David Duchovny, followed by an embrace of Halle Berry with a dollop of syrup on the side isn't an appetizing dish. **See**

Enjoyment *Water, water, milk, milk, and a little cranberry. There*

Is Retrospect—Glosses your palate—it can be refreshing to order something different. **There**

We're not saying that Dogme's First Lady, Susanne Bier, is old or anything, but honestly, the Danish sauce pot is super hot for her age.

LWLies: Even though you've had success in Europe, is there a degree to which you felt that, making a film in America for the first time, you were starting over again?

Bier: No, I wouldn't say that I was starting over again because I feel very confident. I've done enough films to know what I can do and what I can't do. But obviously it is a different. That's one of the reasons for doing it. One of the most frightening things in life — and not just for movie makers but for anybody who reaches a certain level of fame — is that at some point people will stop opposing your opinions because you've proved yourself right. It's dangerous to be too comfortable.

LWLies: Was it a struggle to work with a major studio?

Bier: I actually really enjoyed it, surprisingly so because I was anticipating it being worse.

LWLies: You never had to stamp your feet and kick up a fuss?

Bier: I think that the studio would say that I did that. I wouldn't say that I did that — I felt that I was being very forthcoming. That mistake is not always the most obvious mistake; sometimes it's more to listen and understand. If we disagreed, I would try and understand what their hesitation was and then I would assess whether I thought they were right, and whether I thought it made sense or not. And if I didn't think it made sense I wouldn't address it.

LWLies: Was it intimidating working with bigger stars?

Bier: No. The thing is, you're at work. You know, Dennis Quaid, Eric and Halle Berry get Oscars because they're great actors so I respect that, but in the situation of making a movie, that's what you do — you sit at the top. If you feel intimidated you should probably start selling costumes instead.

LWLies: Do you see yourself as a figurehead in terms of Scandinavian film?

Bier: In Denmark? Like, there is the football team and then there is me? Yeah, to an extent I feel that. I feel a bit like I do with my family — I don't want to disappoint them. I don't want to disappoint my extended Danish family. I don't promise that I won't, but I will do my best in order not to disappoint them.

LWLies: It's been over a decade since the Dogme manifesto was announced. What is its legacy? Do you think it achieved its aims?

Bier: I think what Dogme did, and has done, is that it pinpointed a way of storytelling which has been really important. It has brought voices back to the screen — many lives and characters — and it has diminished slightly looking at Hollywood and trying to do enormous lighting and big costume pieces and things like that. It's actually taken storytelling back to their core in Europe, and I think in that respect it's been very important. Actually I do think it's been hugely influential. *Lee: What's next?*

Find more words on the website at www.10bestintalk.com.uk



THE SAVAGES

Available on DVD

10 Best Interview
Susanne Bier
Interviewed by
Lee, 20th March 2007
Interviewed by
Lee, 20th March 2007

There is a sad moment

in every adult's life when their parents are unable to look after themselves and the role of the carer is reversed. It's a hard situation made harder if you don't particularly like your parents. How do you deal with the heavy burden of a person who did nothing but neglect and abuse you?

That is the premise behind Susanne Jensen's second feature. It's a depressing subject that could have become a soul-destroying film, but instead, we're treated to brilliantly subtle performances — wonderful direction and a healthy dose of black humour that doesn't compromise the serious subject matter.

Philip Baymore Hoffman and Laura Linney are estranged siblings Jan and Wendy Savage, who are completely obsessed with their own lives. He's an academic who can't commit to his long-term Polish girlfriend even though she's about to be deported, she's an aspiring playwright who keeps and stays stationary while having an affair with a married neighbour. It's their father Larry's ill, brilliant Philip Boscoe (Jensen) that throws the pair together, as his

lured toilet behaviour combined with his partner's death spells the end of his term in a posh neighbourhood. As tough situations arise, we're never told what he did to them or their mother to make her run off — there are no dramatic reflections, confessions or speeches — Jensen simply lets the acting do the talking, successfully enough that the details of what Larry may or may not have done seem scarcely relevant. Unsurprisingly there's no happy ending, but you'll be glad that we leave the Savages a little more content than we found them. *Lee: Set*

Anticipation: Philip Baymore Hoffman's third film of the decade, and we're still got room for more. *Four*

Enjoyment: excellent, from beginning to end. When does the Jennifer rank film come out? *Four*

In Retrospect: The witty lines and performances will feed back at the same medium. *Four*

I'M NOT
THERE

THE
MUSICIAN

Biography
Lives and Times
The World of Dylan
Followed by The
Song Book

It was Hegel who

suggested that history is governed by the dictates of 'world-historical' individuals. They alone, he said, have the rare power to rise above the limited horizon of their own age. If that's true, the last century belonged to one such man—Bob Dylan—a singer, actor, artist and activist who has repeatedly investigated nature in order to recognise himself in it.

The concept is at the heart of Todd Haynes' new quasi-biopic of the rock genius, *Song and Dance Man*. It's a movie which plots around Dylan's ability to shape-shift, and the manifold identities he continues to sport. That Haynes succeeds in capturing these ever-changing essences is attributable to one of the better cinematic tricks of recent memory: the dramatization of Dylan's metamorphoses by using multiple actors, genres and stories to trace the diverse musical themes in the songwriter's life.

In all, Dylan is re-rendered sixfold. First, and most intriguingly, by Marcus Carl Franklin as Woody: a young blues re-embodiment of Dylan's bygone reverence for the folk music of Woody Guthrie. Dylan's subsequent protest and bourgeois Christianity periods are depicted similarly via neo-documentary footage of Christian Bale as Jack Rollins, informal chronicler of American unrest turned Californian pastor. Both are made manifest by spokenly idiosyncratic versions of Dylan songs ('The Lonesome Death of Hattie Carroll' and 'Residing On', respectively).

Third is Ben Whishaw as Arthur, the manifestation of French symbolist poet Arthur Rimbaud and, more broadly, an evocation of the singer's idyllic embrace of Beat doublethink. Fourth, and most

tenderheartedly, is Cole Bleichert as Jude, the genderless Dylan of Pennsylvania's *Don't Look Back* as he might have been captured by Fellini, or even Richard Lester. Her performance is reminiscent of Anthony Hopkins' in *Moon*, where physical and vocal mannerisms pay handsomer dividends than mere facial like-ness.

All of which leaves us with the two chapters which function as the film's glue—a centrepiece affair, du cancer and a Wild West strident. Veiled admissions to the Rolling Thunder Revue abound in the latter, including a hazy reprisal of Dylan's own cameo in Pocklington's *Pat Garrett and Billy the Kid*, with Richard Gere

earing chutzpah as an auxiliary Billy (Berry) shot in the back—by a motorcycle crash.

Although the lead liner of the film's narratives, Gere's sections are without doubt among its most gratifying—battered only in that, by Heath Ledger's *The Australian* actor is positively convulsing as Robbie, an actor who plays Dylan in a movie and whose relationship to the painter Claire (Charlotte Gainsbourg) mirrors Dylan's marriage to, and divorce from, Sara Lownds. The scrupulously checked-in intensity of their shared scenes lends an otherwise-lacking straightforwardness to a film which, in the final analysis,

feels much, much bigger than mere musical biography. Indeed, unintended nods to Hegel notwithstanding, one might read it as a personal history of the twentieth century. **Best: Andrew Schmitz**

Anticipation: Strange Place Where Things Breakfast - **Five**

Enjoyment: Is Taken a Lot to Laugh, It Takes a Brain to Cry - **Four**

Is Retrospect: Night Connection to My Heart (Has Anybody Seen My Love) - **Five**



THE GOOD NIGHT

discovered
with James
Gandhi, 30, in
the role of "The
Good Night" in
the film "The
Good Night"

Gary (Martin Freeman)

used to be a pop star. Now he writes advertising jingles, lives in bed with girlfriend Doris (Dorothy Pittman), and envisions the growing professional and romantic success of former band mate Paul (Simon Pegg). It's no surprise when the beautiful, sensuous Anna (Penelope Cruz) blossoms his dreamlike one night - and returns in an even more fitting outfit the next - that he begins to question the value of waking up. Soon Gary turns his back on reality in favour of the emotional horrors of his dreams.

The fine line between truth and fantasy is hardly a novel one to draw. Whether in Charlie Kaufman and Michel Gondry's *Charlie and the Chocolate Factory* or the Spotted

Mind or Gondry's solo effort *The Science of Sleep*, the surrealist visualism offered by visits to the unconscious has been richly mined. Reified as it is in this bewonderable oeuvre, Jake Pollock's feature film debut doesn't sound half bad. And it's not half bad - it's all but.

God knows what Gary's pop lyrics were like because his imagination sucks. Visually the

beach setting of his fortresses is as stale and flat as his relationship with Doris. Worse still is the sight of a disembodied Cruz floating through the solar system, and later on a lidded sea shore, begging Gary to make love to her.

After wondering why you bothered, you'll wonder why they did. And then you'll cast *The Good Night* to the neglected depths of your unconscious,

where it belongs. **Emmanuel Pilon**

Anticipation: Hollywood heavyweight plus critical comedy's best night since your hopes... **Time**

Enjoyment: ...only to dash them soon after. **Q**

In Perspective: **Q**ough Lenses: **Q**



Driver responsible for road.

DEFENDER

DEFENDER

DEFENDER



Indie legend Gus Van Sant talks exclusively to EW about his latest film, *Paranoid Park*.

EW.com: What is your relationship with the Oregon skateboarding community?

Van Sant: I was never really part of that community but I was skateboarding in the '80s. By the time I spent some time in Portland in the '90s there was this very intense skate community which eventually built the park where we shot the film. Now they're all on their vacation and have kids and stuff. The raw kids were very helpful and interested in us shooting, but there was also some skepticism, and there was suspicion between the different skate parks.

EW.com: Did the kids mind that their skate park was renamed *Paranoid Park* for the film?

Van Sant: They didn't seem to care that we called it that. There is a *Paranoid Park* in Portland but it's not a skate park. We called it that because the guy was paranoid. And the kids call it *Paranoid Park* but it's not, it's called *Marmadeade Skate Park*. Because some people do drugs just because they don't work people fucking with their park. It's a fuck like calling Bag Boy "*Paranoid Boy*" and making it an all of the community refer to it as *Paranoid Boy*.

EW.com: You advertised the casting on MySpace, and Gabe Nevins went along to get a role as a skating extra. What was it like working with him?

Van Sant: He had a very sunny way about him and he also had an intense visual history. He liked acting. He is quite different in real life, and is a lot younger than the character. In real life he's less savage.

EW.com: Christopher Doyle collaborated with Rain Li, a 24-year-old Chinese cinematographer, who's been working in film since she was 16. Did Rain's age help to get such intimate performances out of the teenage cast?

Van Sant: I think so, as was an interesting combination of Rain and Chris. I guess she did have an effect on them.

EW.com: How did you create the music?

Van Sant: We had Chris Lopez that I found on *For Good Will Working* from around the world using record collections as music or soundtracks. I never had a chance to use them and I decided now I was using this music, which I'd had for a really long time, and I had then recording specially made from Richard Price who has a music shop in PDX in Portland every Monday at nine — he's had this program on air for 30 years. He made three tapes for me and I started playing it alongside the football player movie in *Klipshoth* that I saw until the football player is in the office, and it worked really nice because you could play the whole thing at the shop so long and it was really relaxed. That's how it started, by using pieces that were like compositions rather than sound effects.

EW.com: The full transcript is up now at www.ew.com/entertainment. **Video:** *BlackBerry*

PARANOID PARK

Paranoid Park
Gus Van Sant
Rain Li
Christopher Doyle

Paranoid Park
Gus Van Sant
Rain Li
Christopher Doyle

Skater boys look like

they know a secret. They claim stretches of the city without speaking. They hunt down new friends, getting themselves against unlearned and challenging terrain. While other teens are accused of apathy, skaters really care. Alex (Gabe Nevins), but that's still something.

Paranoid Park is based on a novel by Blake Nelson about a skater with a secret. Please are watching Alex (Gabe Nevins) at school, asking about a gruesome event that took place on the railroad, where they found his body. Unable to talk to anyone, Alex writes down his story, trying to make sense of the facts and his feelings, struggling to order and contain his recollections just as skaters reassess their environment, shaping and moulding it to fit their needs. And as that experience is revealed, Alex enters further into the delirium of a disoriented teenager — not confused or uncertain, but in shock.

Gus Van Sant chose out this sports narrative through the

expressive grunts passed from a face that shows only resignation. He shows the teenage world as we remember it, with the maggy weight of lost emotions and the poignancy of places and people doomed to pass.

The delicate, typically oblique film is like the agonised silence of a nervous 16-year-old. Yet Van Sant shows a respect for their self-isolation and discomfort and suggests that, as we grow old and comfortable, we become diluted: far removed from our concentrated and more truthful teenage selves. **Noty bryt yst!**

Anticipation: Gus Van Sant back on high school after the dreary *Klipshoth*. **Noty bryt yst!**

Enjoyment: Free-wheeling through a teenager's world will make you want to buy a skateboard. **Noty bryt yst!**

In Retrospect: An open ending lets the film end out and stay with you. **Noty bryt yst!**



MY BLUEBERRY NIGHTS

WONG KAR-WAI
DIRECTOR
NATALIE PORTMAN
CASTING

THE
MOVIE

You're born, you go to school, you mope about for a few years and then you go travelling. It's the stock rite of passage for young go-getters these days, and anyone who says different can go to hell. Yet, as those who have journeyed to far away lands will surely attest while the head roasts an immense curiosity in the culture and rituals of the new, the heart is always searching for that little piece of home.

In his new, American-set road movie, *My Blueberry Nights*, you get the sense that Wong Kar Wai is suffering from a terminal case of homesickness, desperately trying to locate the effervescent whir of downtown Hong Kong in the flat, unadorned planes of the US. The dislocation is palpable, and his film offers up the sort of home-fried approximation of Americana usually reserved for

the Macy's Day Parade and border-town rodeos of this world. It's the kind of film you might see in a souvenir store next to the personalized number plates and the "God Bless America" T-shirts.

There are other problems. Costarring casting has its not once but twice. Wong makes the initial error of calling upon wined coffee-table jazz chanteuse Norah Jones to carry his film, but then trumps himself by partnering her up with pretty-boy actor Justin Jude Lee.

Jones plays Elizabeth, a story-eyed diatribe who discovers that her boyfriend has been doing the dirty on her and finds a shoulder to cry on in the form of Jeremy (Lee), a chipper Massachusetts owner who has been a passive observer to myriad over-the-counter emotional breakdowns over the years. With a narrative nod to *Giselle* and

Kennedy, she decides the only way she can overcome her past is to look to the road, and so heads straight down Route 96, via Memphis, Reno and Vegas.

With his previous two films—in *Mood for Love* and *2046*—Wong proved himself a cinematic stylist without equal, as well as a master of coiled sexual tension and coolly measured social nuance. *My Blueberry Nights* is just simply aesthetically jam-packed with the well-intentioned marketing on love and relationships that made *Chungking Express* such a hugely compassionate film but with a heavy-handed symbolism and Hallmark sentimentality that ruins it.

The first sign of anything gelling with Wong's aesthetic exuberance (the film is undeniably gorgeous) is David Strathairn's nightwear traffic cop. Arrogant,

whose tender performance offers the film's lone emotional sucker punch. With Natalie Portman and Rachel Watson cropping up for stock sweetie bits parts later on, the nature of Elizabeth's spontaneous voyage of self-discovery quickly turns up the movie as a whole: elegant, moderately tender, but far from transcendent. *Jersey Springer*

Anticipation *3 1/2*
Wong Kar Wai, *2002/03* *Fear*

Enjoyment *1 1/2*
Judged and measured
take on relationships
and the US. *See*

In Retrospect—
In a career that has spanned 20 years, Wai's has been a mix of... We'll let him off: *Three Lovers*. *See*



IN THE VALLEY OF ELAH

Anticipation
Tommy Lee Jones
Charlize Theron
Tommy Lee Jones
Charlize Theron

Tommy Lee Jones

You can tell how

important a film is by the amount of make-up its lead actress is wearing. If Charlize Theron's natural face foundation is anything to go by in *The Valley of Elah*, must be Very Serious Stuff indeed.

And so it is. Unspooling with none of the stylistic idiosyncrasies of Paul Haggis' feature debut, *Crash* (and mercifully none of its faux-liberal clichés), *In the Valley of Elah* is a perfectly crafted moral mystery that combines forensic intelligence with emotional subtlety. The question at stake here is not "Whodunnit?", but "Who's responsible?"

Tommy Lee Jones is Hank Deerfield, a retired Marine investigator whose son, Mike, has followed in his old man's footsteps only to go missing on his return from Iraq. Damaged mob tie phone footage suggests that the young soldier suffered some kind of trauma, but when the military prove unable to

answer his questions, Hank is forced to make the long journey to Mike's barracks to find out just what the hell is going on. He hooks up with Detective Sanders (Theron) after a grisly murder spurs his suspicions, and the two of them set about picking their way through a political minefield to get to The Truth. Assuming that is: they can handle The Truth.

This is powerful stuff from Haggis, light-years away from the likes of Robert Redford's liberal golf trip *Lions for Lambs*. In Whiteville, Tennessee, he's discovered an America every bit as foreign to our eyes as the streets of Baghdad. Away from the cosmopolitan centers of New York and LA, this is a country of soul-numbing strip-it architects where the grey uniformity of the buildings is mirrored in the politically secked partnership of the people. Everything is suffused in sulphurous green and greys, as if the noxious hypocrisy

of the administration that feeds on fears like this has somehow seeped back into the atmosphere, poisoning everything it touches.

In the middle of it all is Tommy Lee Jones and That Face, unmistakable with its creases and crags and those sloping, vermillion lines that pull his eyes down into a state of perpetual sorrow. It's easy to just point the camera at an actor like this and leave him to it, but Haggis has pushed and prodded until Jones offers him something real. This is a man whose eyes are pried open, almost against his will, until he's stripped of illusions and is forced to gaze on the real state of America.

This is compelling and even sublime filmmaking at its finest, combining the risk entertainment values of a Hollywood big shot with a perceptive and confrontational agenda. There's no tub-thumping or blind ideology, just sharp

writing and precision performances. And even if the film doesn't go quite far enough in daring to criticize the individual US fighting man (it's a taboo in American cinema), its final shot still packs a whopper of an emotional punch. Consider us scored. **Mark Kishor**

Anticipation. The guy who only just realized Americans are racist takes on the Iraq War. **B+**

Enjoyment. Everything works: performance, writing, direction, art design. Oh, except those American on the war. **C+**

Is it bad? Poor

Is it a cross? Haggis divides opinion, and rightly so, but he's taken a giant leap forward with this one. **B+**

Shooting the shit with Entourage star Paul Haggis. He can direct a bit too. Oh, and he writes apparently.

LWLee: Variety critic Todd McCarthy said he's not interested in the glut of Iraq war movies coming out and neither is the US public. What do you make of that?

Haggis: I think it is probably the truth. I don't think anyone is interested in who is responsible. This is a tragedy of huge proportions and I think people would much rather see something suspenseful or whatever's out. That is part of the problem we have in America. We create this huge mess but just pour the finger and then get on with our lives.

LWLee: Do you think the US is particularly poor at self-criticism? Although Bill O'Reilly doesn't represent all of America, he did say something along the lines of, 'This is what we ask of people who oppose the war - support us or shut up.'

Haggis: It's terribly dangerous to live in a culture like that. But Bill O'Reilly doesn't live where the values that America was founded on. We just pretend to, as do a lot of neo-cons. But really most of the media just parroted anything they said. We've asked our troops to face horrors that we never have to face. The decisions that these 18-year-old kids have to face on a daily basis are unfathomable in the extreme. When I found out how horrific the rules of engagement were, I asked myself, 'What would I do?' I didn't have a good answer so I decided to write a film that was political but not partisan.

LWLee: There seems to be a taboo about criticising soldiers in US films. Is there a moral cowardice, though, in being against the war but supporting the troops, who are fundamentally instruments of the war?

Haggis: The people who have bumper stickers saying, 'Support the troops!' really don't support them. They just slap them on the back and say, 'Well done.' But we have the highest rate of suicide and homelessness in our military's history. They come home shattered and demoralised. They don't need to be killed. We shouldn't blame these kids for the decisions made by the Pentagon, Congress and, ultimately, by us. If they commit war crimes, they do so in our name. I think that as something the public don't want to face.

LWLee: Do you worry that your film may get buried in all the negative hype surrounding the Iraq war?

Haggis: When I decide to do a movie, I don't ask myself whether the audience is ready for it. I make a film because I have questions that are growing in my gut. With this, I tried to make it a fulfilling experience, not just preaching for two hours. If you ask some disturbing questions, then you have done your job.

LWLee: You gave an interesting performance out of Tarek's Lee Jones - how did you approach working with him?

Haggis: He is a very intelligent man who just needs to understand the character and agree with the approach. When he does, he delivers. I took dialogue away from both him and Christian Slater and trusted them to tell us what was going on. And they did. **Mail@hollywood**

There's more at www.247entertainment.co.uk



HALF MOON

SHARAF DIZ
DIZEN (DIZEN)
DIZEN (DIZEN)
DIZEN (DIZEN)
DIZEN (DIZEN)

SHARAF DIZ
DIZEN (DIZEN)
DIZEN (DIZEN)
DIZEN (DIZEN)

Those of you after sweetbookish adventure and razor-sharp dialogue may be disappointed by the one, but that would be missing the point. Kurdish-Iranian director Bahman Ghobadi has followed his acclaimed 2004 *Turtles Can Fly* with a tragic comic epic, full of symbolism and introspection.

The plot follows Kurdish folk musician Memo (Farid Farhadi), who is given the chance to perform in Iraq. Kurdistan following the downfall of Saddam. He gathers his sons and bus driver Kato (Afshin Mirmasht) and sets off through the barren countryside towards the border. It soon becomes clear that the trip will be marred by difficulty - between by one of Memo's sons after seeing a war man. Memo is torn: the elder as the slow-mo imagery and haunting soundtrack hint that the boundaries between fact and fiction, fantasy and realism are becoming blurred.

Memo is convinced that the group needs a female vocalist to complete the ensemble, so travels to a village of 1,304 isolated female musicians, whereupon he discovers singer Hesho (Hesho Tahiro). The village is symbolic - a metaphor for Iran's oppressed women, forbidden from performing in public with men. When Hesho agrees to accompany the group, she has to be hidden under the floorboards of the bus. Meanwhile, Memo becomes tortured by

repeated visions of his own death as the journey continues. It's then that the enigmatic figure of Niswaning, or 'Half Moon' (Golshah Farshad), joins the group. Where she comes from we don't know is she a dream? And what does she stand for?

Half Moon is a slice of Kurdish life - a snapshot of a people who have been oppressed for centuries. Though some may find the condemnation of Kurdistan's Fate course hard to take, the film reflects the character of its people: serious, resilient and even comic. This is a triumphant return for Ghobadi, a filmmaker persecuted about his people and his land. (Don't try to rationalise it, but do ask questions of the film and yourself. Isn't that what cinema is all about?) **Ed Scerif**

Anticipation...

Doesn't look like one for the autumn movie season. **TD**

Enjoyment...

Something for everyone - serious issues for the world cinema aficionados and comedy for everyone else. **Paul**

In retrospect...

In today's climate of backstage blockbusters, it's always interesting to see a film that makes you think. **Paul**



OUR DAILY BREAD

Directed by Nikolaus Geyrhofer
 Germany, 2007, 95 minutes

Director and cinematographer Nikolaus Geyrhofer's *Our Daily Bread* sits somewhere between art installation and documentary. Paying no mind to the "message" of the film, Geyrhofer communicates in a dispassionate idiom of still cameras and simple tracking shots, suggesting that the documentary is an observational rather than an explanatory medium. That he is able to sustain interest for 50 minutes is testament to the power of Geyrhofer's restrained composition, which avoids the hypnotic sterility of the processed food industry whilst never resorting to cheap judgement. *Mike Davis*



I AM LEGEND

Directed by James Cameron
 USA, 2007, 127 minutes

Will Smith puts in an above average performance in this surprisingly perverse take on the zombie apocalypse genre that focuses on the day-to-day trivialities and mental degeneration that go along with being the last man alive in a world full of poorly rendered flesh eaters. The undead are surprisingly few and far between - in fact the supporting act for the majority of the film is Smith's dog (who's pretty good). Although he eventually finds some other survivors, the film is stylized by a rushed deconstruction and shoe-horned quasi-religious message that is awkward and inappropriately cliché. *Jonathan Wilkins*



DON'T TOUCH THE AXE

Directed by Jacques Rivette
 France, 2007, 100 minutes

Jacques Rivette has returned to Balzac for this tale of nineteenth-century privilege. And as he waxes 180 in course as no surprise that time should be a crucial metaphor. Charlie took in the corners of rooms, chomped on meringues and ring out their Proustian bell towers as a young general (Guillaume Depardieu) finds his greatest battle is to conquer a married but forty-something woman (Isabelle Huppert). They play court over endless evenings, but she refuses to betray her husband, and her social position. This conflict of wills makes for a gripping film, albeit one that sometimes feels a little too cloistered. *Jason Mills*



STILL LIFE

Directed by Zhang Ke
 China, 2007, 100 minutes

Life is anything but still in this extraordinary study of social and cultural tensions from Chinese director Jia Zhang Ke, which focuses on the construction of the Three Gorges Dam in eastern China. The film follows two people's search for lost relatives, and efforts to steal documentary-like artefacts with a yearning almost absurdist tone. Drawing much of its emotional lift from lingering shots of the bruised landscape, it looks like the sort of naive post-apocalyptic Hollywood saga Zhang Ke has captured the point where progress and tradition cross swords, and it's a quietly devastating place. *Jonny Dyer*




DEFINITELY
MAYBE

Definitely, Maybe is knob cheese. Let's qualify: it's a room-tem for kiddies. It's teenage for men. It's knob cheese. Ryan Reynolds is the dawning dad telling his daughter (Miranda O'Brien) a bedtime story about which women from their simultaneous love affairs became her mother. Whether this is a subtle nodding for a memoir is massively open to question, but more relevant is how this film suggests that Hollywood is ready to take on contemporary relationships and parenting. We see the 'anything goes,' over more emotionally complicated pregnancies, and it's knob cheese not quite reflected in *Sadeen Hennes*.



ALICE IN THE CITIES

Wim Wenders' fourth feature begins with a German journalist's fruitless journey across the USA for a story before he returns home in search of the family of a nine-year-old girl with whom he's been involved. It's a tribute to stars Rainer Verger and Yvett Rottlieb that this film, which falls temporally and thematically somewhere between Louis Malle's *Zone* (see *Metro* 7/10/92) and Luc Besson's *Love* (1994), manages to retain its innocence while never descending into schmaltz. And there are many astounding moments, including a long take of a child eating his bike that's reminiscent of a Bill Bennett clip. *Jogos* 9/93.

A close-up portrait of Wesley Snipes, looking intensely at the camera. He is wearing a dark superhero costume with a glowing, multi-colored winged emblem on his chest. The background is dark with streaks of light and energy emanating from his chest area.

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CHAPTER 5
The Back
SECTION

W

IN WHICH WE
DISCUSS

The
medium
of
Film

IN ITS MANY

~~MEANS~~ MESMERISING

forms!

BACK

**PADDY
CONNAIS
LE
SCORE**

**WIM WENDERS
REGARD LE
FUTUR**

SECTION

**LES FETES QUI NE
SONT PAS TOUT LE
SCINTILLEMENT
ET LE PRESTIGE**

15+

**LES
TOUS
DERNIERS
DVDS**

**NICOLAS
PHILBERT
SUR QUALITE
PAS QUANTITE**

**NICOLAI
FUGLSIG
A LE DOUBLE SIX**

**LES
FAVORIS
DE PAPA**

**DE PLUS:
HOMER ET EDDIE**



NICOLAS
PHILBERT

No School like the Old School

Wherever you look these days there's a fiery young filmmaker pumping the latest 'No Nukes Barre!' export of some political hot potage or other. Being a cat and you'd hit Michael Moore (okay, preferably); *Taking Liberties*; Chris Arlino; *A Good Education*; Basil Delella; *Why We Fight*; Eugene Jarvis; *Day in Progress*; James Langley; and even good old Russ Murno with his Robert McNamara interview, *The Day of War*. And that's not even counting the other side, from the late Michael Moore mass infidelity to 9/11 conspiracy theorists and pill-popping Talk Radio hosts.

Don't get us wrong—some of these are powerful films with compelling messages about how we're all doomed and everything. But for all the talk of a new 'golden age,' in so much of the posturing, the polemics and the thinly veiled propaganda, a fresh like documentary may have found its voice, but lost a little bit of its soul.

Thank God, then, for Nicolas Philbert. The 39-year-old director

believes in speaking over quantity—as high as 30 years, he's managed to churn out a whopping eight films. But each one is a unique and precious jewel—journeys into the most unlikely places, chance meetings with the most unusual characters—and are, more often than not, both inspiring and profoundly uplifting.

If 1993's award-winning *As The Land of the Dead* represented an international (hardly) rough, it was anyone's guess that five or *there* a decade later that really put him on the map. Set in a single room school in rural France, and following the progress of a class of four to 15-year-olds over the course of a year, it had all the trademarks of Philbert's best work: a simple, observational style, a low-key subject, inspiration and effortless insight.

As with his latest work, *Seek in Norway*, there is also a sense of first and second colliding, a stylistic genre which has never been described as a 'documentary portrait' rather than

a simple documentary filmmaker. But Philbert has his own ideas about that. "I don't like labels or pigeon holes," he says. "If there is a border that counts for me, it's not the one between documentary and fiction, it's more how a filmmaker takes one consideration the question."

For Philbert, modern documentary films are fundamentally flawed. We are experiencing, he says, "the death of the subject," in which the value of a documentary is judged by the importance of its topic. As a man whose latest subject is a personal pilgrimage to the French countryside on the trail of a long-forgotten film, that is clearly not him.

"Yes, an immigrant against the death of the subject," he says. "You can make a historic film on a subject that appears to be totally dead, and you can do a complete piece of that having started out with a great subject." This new obsession, he believes, has made documentary less honest. "I don't like how Michael



Mount manipulates spectators, how he serves up spectacular effects of emotion, and how he, unfairly, in film after film, is a great talent for drama guys," he says. "I work differently. I make films more to learn myself, to look at the world differently rather than to deliver a message to humanity?"

Never has the personal edge in his work been more obvious than in *Jack in Normandy*, a journey that sees Lioret reconnect with his own past through the resilience of a small country community where he shot one of his first films as an assistant director alongside René Allier. As a young man, Philippe spent three months traveling from farm to farm collecting the help of the locals to fill key roles in the story of the nineteenth century massacre *Père Romain*, who had lived in the area. As *Jack in Normandy* shows, it was a transformation experience not just for the aspiring film maker but for the towns as a whole.

"They were very involved that I should come back 10 years afterwards to see them," he explains. "They

were sensitive to the fact that we didn't forget them." Indeed, the tension between the transience of the filmmaking process and the permanence of the images you leave behind is at the heart of Philippe's film. There's a melancholy in seeing the young actors of Allier's film surrounded by families of their own age, and it forces you to think about the responsibility that a filmmaker has to his subjects after they've served their purpose. While he moves on to the next project, they return to lives which are sorely overshadowed by the real trauma of cinema. "There is something about filmmaking that is theft," agrees Philippe. "You take something away, and what do we give back?"

In many respects, *Jack in Normandy* is a risky project, not just because Allier's original film (full title: *Moi, Pierre Romain, agent secret au sein, au sein et au sein...*) wasn't exactly bare your entrails film fun quizzing up to review it, but also because Philippe had no idea what he would find as his camera. As a

happy accident he has a screen for uncovering traces of quiet profundity we'll never know – this townfolk had grown into remarkable characters. What could have been a per me journey, of interest only to the filmmaker and his old cast, is given a universal appeal by the humanity of its characters. There's the couple who talk morning of making their child was champagne. The argumentative communist baker who had to rebuild her power of speech after suffering a stroke. And there is the region of Claude Ribbe, the actor who played *Père Romain* only, it happens, to find God.

Asked about the reaction of audiences to his film, Philippe says, "They're moved by how these people who have been through war, singular experience of cinema are capable of expressing their feelings because what they're saying is at the same time both simple and deep." Simple and deep, it's the perfect description of Philippe's work. *Mark Borkowski*

Alternative Festival Calendar



THIS YEAR, WHY NOT KICK CANNIES TO THE CURS AND SAY 'BOLLOXES' TO BERLIN? IT'S TIME TO EXPAND YOUR HORIZONS AND START PLANNING SOME TRULY UNIQUE FESTIVAL TRIPS. HERE ARE A FEW TO GET YOU STARTED.

HALLOWEEN SHORT FILM FESTIVAL

LONDON, UK

JANUARY 4-11

It's one held in Halloween and the film isn't actually horror, but January was a showcase of some of the best new short film. Plus, it might be the only Halloween event where you can come dressed as yourself and not be called 'freak'.

www.shortfilm.org.uk

ONE WORLD INTERNATIONAL HUMAN RIGHTS DOCUMENTARY FILM FESTIVAL

PRAGUE, CZECH REPUBLIC

MARCH 5-11

Apparently film festivals aren't all about awards — they can be about promoting the story of human rights and exposing wrongs. Or, like the One World International Human Rights Documentary Film Festival, they can do both.

www.godown.cz

BIRDS EYE VIEW

LONDON, UK

MARCH

Launched in 2005, Birds Eye View was the first major UK women's film festival. While the name makes it sound like a Harrods stock warning to happen, it's actually a platform for some of the best female filmmakers around. We're not sure if it's meant to be a pun or not.

www.birdseyeview.co.uk

CAMBRIDGE SUPER-8 FILM FESTIVAL

CAMBRIDGE, UK

APRIL/MAY

The Cambridge Super-8 Film Festival is a showcase of the best film made exclusively on Super-8 cameras (those old school cameras). The organizers are receiving applications by email.

www.cambridge-super8.org

POCKET FILM FESTIVAL

PARIS, FRANCE

JUNE

Instead of playing that hip-hop on the bus or eating happy slapping videos for YouTube, visit a screening and create a short film on your phone to be shown on the big screen in Paris' Pompidou Centre.

www.knowledgefilms.fr/short

RHYTHM OF THE LINE

BERLIN, GERMANY

OCTOBER

Whenever it's not re-imagining the high street, graffiti artists in Berlin are making films about it. Usually you'd think that would be self-censoring making art, but they go around the wall enough to have a festival that celebrates graffiti culture.

www.rtl.de

ARKETOR — ARKETSTWITTE HORROR FILM FESTIVAL

ARKETSTWITTE, WALIS

OCTOBER-NOVEMBER

You'd need a good reason to go to either an Arctic or Arketstwitte, so here's one: the Arketstwitte Horror Film Festival. Only in its second year, it uses the best of the genre with guest speakers.

www.arketstwitte.com/en/uk/short

ROMANTICISM FILM FESTIVAL

BOLZANO, ITALY

NOVEMBER

The dates from the Romanticism Film Festival before all films used were 'romantic'. They don't have to be music-based — all the films challenge our preconceptions and bring modern relevance to some old themes.

www.romanticism.it

BERG UND ABENTURER FILM FESTIVAL

GRAZ, AUSTRIA

NOVEMBER

Make sure you've attended in the right kind of rock before heading to Austria. This unique festival covers extreme sports and also the human side of mountaineering, not the stuff from Blackpool or a frozen crack in a mountain.

www.bergsundabenteuer.com

ONE TAKE FILM FESTIVAL

BAGGERS, CROATIA

NOVEMBER 30-31

The One Take Film Festival's only condition is that all films are made with one take, so just hit record and let it all hang on. Short content! Or a smart way to get out of that party during sunset.

www.onetakefestival.com

HITE INTERNATIONAL UNDERWATER FILM FESTIVAL

SELGRADE, SWITZERLAND

DECEMBER 14-15

Underwater cinema comes to the fore in the International Underwater Film Festival with a variety of films and documentaries about the deep. Though the rules demand that at least 10 per cent of the footage is shot underwater, you'll be watching from the safety of dry land.

www.hite.ch

SHORT
FILM

The Book Stops Here

Last issue we offered a taste of the joys of shooting people's new book *Get Your Short Film Funded, Made and Seen*. After a *Backlist*-style cliff hanger, we pick it up again with part two of Chris Le Comber's excellent chapter, 'No Russian Skies: How to Avoid Common Production Cock Ups'.

1 CREATIVITY AND MANAGING YOUR TEAM

Apologies for using the 'management' sociology again because hey, we are all working 'art'! But if you have a good plan, and people know what to expect each day, you are setting yourself up for a dream shoot. Some of the most exciting aspects of making film can be in the moments when you make a mistake and it looks great, or when you decide to try something new, or even grab totally different shots as a whim that finding the space and confidence to allow that creativity and spontaneous collaboration to emerge, paradoxically often comes out of giving your team a clear sense of where you are going each day. If everything is shown all the time, it can be hard to stay focused, inspired and open to new possibilities.

1 FOOD WONDERFUL FOOD

Low budget shoots often mean you have begged your crew to work for a personal fee, sometimes agreed to make sure (at the very least) that

you have delegated someone to look after *on-set food/drink* throughout the shoot. Good food makes for a very happy crew, and a happy crew is the lifeblood of your film.

1 GIVE GOOD SOUND

I really wanted to make this my first point. SOUND IS SO, SO, SO IMPORTANT! If shooting DV, NEVER EVER use the on-board mic unless you have the proper XLR inputs and a quality mic. The most horrible lesson in the world is when you go back to review the footage from a day's shoot to find bad audio. Sometimes it sounds hollow and you think, 'I'd just bring up the levels in post'! It won't work! Because when you dialling up the levels, up comes everything else – the ambient level of the room, the reverberant echo, the slight wind outside, the hum of the refrigerator or the air conditioning.

There is also an old saying in film: When the sound is GOOD, people come out of a film saying, 'Wow – the lighting was great in that film!'. The importance of sound is remarkably underemphasised because it is often subliminal to the direct experience of a film. And yet it is one of the most important technical aspects to get right on the day.

For more words of wisdom, head to www.shortcouples.org/shortcuts and head over your next movie.

Get Your Short Film Funded, Made and Seen



Taker of Cherries

Comedians are all about the first time, they need direct
directors fussing because they're credible enough to just offer,
and accessible enough to suggest it just might happen. Paddy
Condon is not such a man.

Condon is also a man who knows his industry. Having
co-written *Dad's Army's* third, and picked up a BAFTA for her
own dramatical debut, *Dog Almighty*, he's seen what happens
when an actor's power takes off, and understands the ways of
film making ropes. To the dichotomy of starring his own on-screen
while flying solo for UK cinema as a risky one to balance.
"The unfortunate thing is, I can't do everybody's first film," he
states. "We've got to do the things that I want to do. I'd do what's
interesting, but I have to do what's needed at the time."

Cutting through the mayhem of his first, he's willing to
pursue exactly what a director's on offer. "Need it," if I need
some money, then I've done that in the past," he says. "I like
making films in home or England, but I can't cut off my nose
to spite my face and say that I'll only make films here. I'd be
robbing myself of experiences." Experiences and cash. But
he's had to find a man who at least adheres to the values of
a 'serious' actor's life.

And anyway, before we get all pious about it, the
comedian is taking a chance on an unknown director can be
more self-serving than a first attempt. With much of Britain's
young actors still struggling to prove their worth abroad, one
more regular performer on the silver screen are the winners
— Jack Black, Ian McKellen, the McKellen or Piers Foulonians.
Those who've racked up more credits than any of them
ever remember. You with a peak in the River's Kestrel under
McKellen's nose, or after a career like Bob Barker's a crack
at a low-budget film, and they're well paid enough. They
know the value of recognizing their roots. The moral of the
story is that the 'serious' career is not to be snubbed. Before



Sam Mendes, a young Peter Jackson suggest all that's best and
straight away the art of Andrew King, a lot of money which
inspired her to do it, so that's the art of the artist, while
her first experience was the making of the other.

So Condon's other was a director and actor. "I've done
the things that I want to do with the people that I like," he says.
If you happen to like good people and to make the most of
them, it's a good thing to do, then all the great
The name of the first time director shouldn't be dismissed.
The name of the first time director shouldn't be dismissed.
The name of the first time director shouldn't be dismissed.
The name of the first time director shouldn't be dismissed.

With Condon's winning words for the short film *Dog
Almighty*, his own dramatic debut, he's fast adding strings
to his bow too. But so what and having dubbed in the studio
system with *The House of the Dead*, he'll be happy to go
back again. "I hope that I get the chance to work with Paul
Greengrass again and show him what I can really do, that
I've got more to give," he says. In the heart of building a 'career'
career is, a career, is a career, is a career, is a career, is a career,
is a career. As for Condon, for one, it's the right way
to do it. *— John Doe*

Check out *Dog Almighty* on our new DVD

WIM WENDERS

Road Warrior

"My films have influenced many young filmmakers and students all over the world," says German director Wim Wenders before adding, perhaps with a touch of sadness, "maybe less so in Germany." After all, he has lived in America for a long time. He has always been some sort of an outsider in Germany.

But it was in an outsider that the leading light of the New German Cinema made much of his best work in the '70s. Wenders' subject was America, perhaps unsurprisingly for someone born just after the end of the Second World War and who had grown up under the influence of the US. America was the greatest evil, in some senses, Germany's future. "It was never so extreme on the part," he says, acknowledging the failure of *The Distant Lover* in 1971. "I was strictly concerned in the present scene."

After in the *Officer* (1976), specially co-edited to mark the 60th anniversary, was a somewhat retrospective, more ambivalent and satirical on the state of US culture, captured through the worldview of a Polish cameraman belonging to a disaffected reporter, and viewed by Krausmann's cameraman, Gao.

In the same year, Bobby Miller's poetic framing, Wenders found a match for his artistic sensibility that had started with the *Kinderkreuz* film *Summer in the City* (1976) and continued through *King of the Road* (1976), a whimsical, if no less so, satirical than David Thomson's "one of the best films of the '70s." Wenders and Miller's collaboration peaked with *The American Friend* (1977) - based on a Patricia Highsmith 'Twilight' novel, and starring Dennis Hopper and Bruce Campbell alongside two of Wenders' idols, Sam Peckinpah and Nicholas Ray - and *Peter, Peter* (1981), with Harvey Keitel, Simon and Garfunkel, and



The script for the latter was Sam Spiegel's (he has worked again with Wenders as 1999's *Even More Beautiful*), and the memorable score was by Ry Cooder, with whom Wenders made musical doc *Surfer's Pine* (1994). *The Outlaw Josey Wales* (1978) was based on a novel by Peter Gaultier, who co-authored with Wenders the historical *Wings of Desire* (1987), starring Bruno Ganz as an angel in Berlin. It was the first time the director had explored German history, albeit through a counterpoint viewpoint.

The collaboration didn't always work, however: the farcical, sprawling *Until the End of the World* (1991) was written with Peter

Carrey, while Tati's *Being* provided the inspiration for the director's latest comedy, *The Million Dollar Hotel* (2005), starring a hilariously unhappy Mel Gibson.

Curiously, Wenders' three most popular films - *Wings of Desire*, *Peter, Peter* and *Surfer's Pine* (1994) - have all been given away on DVD with bonus discs. That says a great deal for one filmmaker for his work, though perhaps also something about our media's tastes. *James Moll*

For all these films and more at the BFI Southbank's two-month *Wim Wenders* season, beginning January 6, or catch a cinema in our nationwide film and TV listings

NICOLAI FUGLSIG

GOT THE SKILLS PAY THE BILLS

The word 'director' usually conjures up images of cinematic visionaries sculpting colossal masterpieces. However, feature films are only a small part of the profession. We are exposed to the work of many more directors every time we turn on the television or click through a website. These are the ad men, and they range from the blatant purveyors of 'buy, buy, buy' marketing messages, to a subtle blend of art and commerce crafted in the name of loved awareness.

One master of the medium is Danish-born director Nicolas Pabsting. Formerly a prize-winning photographer, he made the transition to film after a chance placing of a video camera on his building roof won a contest. "It was a natural change," he says. "I've always wanted to tell stories with pictures. With film, I just wanted to tell small, strange stories in a new way."

The search for small stories led Pabsting to advertising. After passing agencies in person for his Sony Erwin Gellé advert, he's now in the creative line with a Guinness. It's a tough gig, following on from the likes of Jonathan Glazer, whose 1995 *Barfly* is one of the most fun ads of all time. But Pabsting's offering does nothing to break with the brand's long, mad-as-hell image of cinema, alcohol, fun and extreme sports.

Packaging a message in a market does not mean people through a remote Argentinian town, the advert has the context of a story of attention to detail to end anything as Tinseltown. But this distance between the creative and the commercial keeps the question of how the craft of a director can work with the needs of the advertising market. According to Pabsting, open from a brief of five to 12 later explaining the concepts of sampling, community and the ever-present message of "What things come to those who wait," he was given a free creative run. "I was presented with the new idea that I couldn't change," he says, "but then I had to make that come alive in an environment that would feel cinematic. As a director, I have to tell all the detail to make the idea come to life. That was my job."

No matter how visually arresting an advert is, however, it still can't escape its crime of *being*. And that's to tell good ads. Doesn't that match the creative process? Pabsting admits no. "Sure, when you are directing adverts, you are telling a product and directing film, you are also telling a story. I find that I am still trying to tell a story—I am less concerned about the product. My work doesn't appear like an advert, they are more mini-movies. I



always try to put the filmmaker cap on, even when I am doing advertising. To me, telling small stories is the key."

That narrative form is what advertisers are after these days. In the age of digital TV and internet streaming, audiences have become increasingly fragmented. They has compelled advertisers to make the biggest possible impact in the shortest possible time. Directors who can create a visual story that catches the viewer's attention are highly sought after indeed. And it isn't just how we watch that's changed, but also the technology as well. These cameras, high definition and widescreens are becoming the norm, and with this, adverts need to be expertly filmed and produced to keep up. It was only logical that brand managers have turned to some of Hollywood's talent to achieve this—and are digging deep to pay for it.

"Advertising is changing," says Pabsting. "It's a much more competitive environment. We're trying to make each other and make great, new, interesting, small stories. It's become more like filmmaking, not just trying to tell a product. I think that is what is inspiring filmmakers in some and try advertising, to experiment with new ideas."

Hollywood's love affair with the advertising world used to be one-way traffic, as the British adverts of the 1970s was powered by social icons like

the Beat hooters and Alan Parker. Now the picture is true: established Hollywood players are flocking to grab a slice of the money, and the cash that comes with it. Michael Mann is trying to tag you *Killer*, Wes Anderson is banking *Hotel* and Martin Scorsese is convincing you to rack up some debt with *Amersbach Express*.

Furthermore, what used to be seen as selling your soul to the highest bidder now holds a great deal of appeal — we might be about to see the second generation of ad men coming of age in feature film makers. "I was very surprised at how much respect and trust there is among studios and executives and film producers generally about wanting to work with advertising directors," says Pabsting. "A lot of people I know of my generation are pitching movie ideas. There will be a whole wave of movies coming out in the next few years that will be done by the 12 or so great concepts in advertising — people like Frank Rodriguez."

Pabsting himself is dipping his toes into the film industry, although he remains tight-lipped about his plans. "I don't like to talk about my projects before I have actually done them because everyone is always talking about what all the movies they're making," he says. "I prefer to make people wait and see." *Ed Andrews*

CROSSOVERS

Directors past, present and future who like a bit of both — art and commerce that is

RIDLEY SCOTT

Coming his teeth on adverts for Heineken in the 1970s without a double prepared Scott for such commercial work as *Gladiator* and *Black Knight*. However, he couldn't resist returning to the art world to shoot his sex-6 DVD advert for Apple Macintosh.

TONY KATE

Despite directing *American Beauty*, J. J. May recently put his name to the Yahoo! Finance advert and then quite frankly retooling, not-much-hate *Deadpool* of the 1970s.

JONATHAN GLAZER

By the time he directed *Sexy Beast* in 2000, Glazer had already made *Barfly* for Guinness, saved the best of all time, and has followed that with Sony Ericsson's "emulating" and a Glasgow housing estate "spot."

KURTIS SCHAFFNER

Having directed the *Wild Doves* advert (the words know what we mean — they're *swampy*), Schaffner is currently re-making Richard D'Amico's 1970s war drama *The Wild Geese* for release in 2010.

FRANK RODRIGUEZ

Ad-god partly responsible for the ubiquitous Sony PlayStation branding of the late '90s. Now doing, um, something cinematic. We do not, but we are convinced that Rodriguez would tell us.

GENRE SPECIFIC

DADDY'S SAUCE



There is nothing that connects these movies. There is but an hysterical misrecognition of suggestion and an apophanetic psychology. No gliding air, no places to launch journeyman directors or the careers of perfectly nice men and women. These films have substance; they want to be solid, dactyl poems. And they need to be, because these are the films your *dad* loves, and he has perurious little time for jump-cuts, long takes, subplots or Czech summations. What he wants is straight talking, straight action, and straight music. So keep they are — just don't tell your mum you stayed up to watch them.

You can understand Jonathan. Hemlock's ("That Bastard") career shift in *The Flyer* Institute magazine you've been looking around a low-level "creative" career for a while, perhaps in a junior floor manager on the BBC news desk, or as post-production for a corporate video. But that, when you assume a new design team for 5 months and brown leather. You're the wrong side of 30 and your keyboard is still stuffed before the team could even get your name right. "Hemlock," you think. "I'll become a teacher."

Some large people (Hawwood from provincialism) claim to be on the contrary. Sadly for Hawwood, his co-ordinating ways are cynical when his forced back to the killing floor by The Agency and its chain-of-command. Some loss, whose obsession with mountains will lead to all kinds of more, beyond no one. Hawwood is out to find the hanging editor of his old partner in making a deep undercover as part of a changing man wrapping the treacherous Egger, where the cartoon will be betrayed by his angry response and the month of outwork.

The plot in *Bad News*, the values represented and Barrow's awkward attempts at charm make the glories look positively innocuous. "I thought I'd grown up now," he tells his giggling friends coquettishly, "but I think I've changed my mind." It's only believable when you realize that only real numbers rise the mountain.

quarters are some of the most authentic committed to films, and 2) *Howe would do all of his own stunts*. Even though he didn't have to.

Clint's insurance premiums were really high in comparison to the benchmark spend on the sub-sectored *McNALLY* data, *Academy Award*. "Since the *Twins*" dropped back to Low Grade, "it would have been cheaper to lower the *Twins*."

Three years of type, filming on these costumes and \$16 million later, the movie slipped from its accuracy and ended one short, up against the *Super Bowl* in the summer blockbuster year. It doesn't take a genius to see that the first drama played out off screen, from the wild hubris of the 1940s, came rather than the water tank, to the publicity machine that promoted the core essence of a lifetime.

The route is a long, slow promenade to a spectacular, waxy canopy that of the ship-emphasizing. For the rest of the trip, the opening plotline around the race to save a run in control from falling into the hands of the Russians is only lightened by as inconspicuously smart word script "If I think you're too handle it, I'm willing to go to the President and do my best to push it through," promises Jason Roberts, a spokesman for Corey On Dr. Al. Pissed! And yet the project would be far stretched, in 1978, his young, would-be prove rubber Spencer Smith actually considered raising the bar to a genuine business opportunity before the new scene and moved into the equally adventurous world of celebrity calendars.

But this is naive, of course, and though thousands are still struggling and hungry, and new wars may satisfy unfulfilled dreams of ambition (I had never made it to the six shales with Park Powers. Why? Because he had you, two graceful little geos), there comes a time when only a party, middle-aged lady in a beige suit really out of Joan Collins made *The Stud* and *The Schickel* when she was about 45 and at the height of her *Rembo's* After look, and they turned away before classes of

color-related signals are common

Squandered from the novel by her equally vulgar sister, Jackie, *The Bird* is essentially Leah Chelover's Lover for the character's "in" character sex, with Keith Moore's old brew due Oliver Tobias in the Midlars role. Bringing in by Collins to run her nightclub - and to have been based on Johnny Gold's '70s celebrity date into, Trump - Tobias was a doing *The Dumb Death* with both Collins and her step-daughter in an explanation that underlines prodigious style. Aside from some dimwits and mafia McElroy's, and the shenanigans of Tobias' ever-ruined pickup, there's almost nothing to separate *The Bird* from its successor, *The Stick*, as Collins' character, Pamela Khalil, finds a parade of druggie kids and posies in a seamy as a world where Cliff Clavin off Oliver was an alpha male and god. And that's curious effect is wrong in, the low-rent depiction of this fevered world of sexual privilege makes for a kind of weary demerol portrait even the impudence of viewers can think, "I reckon I'd have a chance there!" And for Collins, the success of them, both merit opportunity kneaded were more. Right, when the upstairs door of was just a man in a fedora offering, live-chance Italian pasta. *Following Without Price*

DADS' DELIGHTS

CARRON TO VACCARIS (1904)

Dr. Geoffrey RAE
Early on, however, not espionage
shoulder from Almar's nuclear with
you was belly dancing, regardless.

THAT LUCKY TOUCH (1970)

Der Christopher Miffo
Arms-trade comedy in which
Roger Moore and Susanah York
reprise their heavy potting from
on Sea Sheer's Day

THE WTLB COMPANY (2004)

Due Andrew V. McLaglen.
Soon to be remade first running,
are columnar necessary copy

DVDs



**AKI KAURISMAKI COLLECTION: THE LENINGRAD COWBOYS (1986-1994)
(DIR. AKI KAURISMAKI)
AVAILABLE NOW**

Over the last three months, we have been treated to DVD renderings of pretty much the entire back catalogue of Finland's preeminent director, Aki Kaurismäki. The fourth (and final) volume collects his director's three collaborations with *Leningrad Cowboys*, a Scandinavian rock 'n' roll outfit who masquerade, feed folk and, well, pretty much anything in their manner. Sporting ornate, tuxedo-quaff, tatty black-coated suits and oversized winkle pickers, the semi-savvy band are adored around the planet by their downcountry, money-hungry rock manager Elina (Kaurismäki's regular Matti Pellonpää).

Directed by an American as "the worst film in the history of the cinema, where you count Sylvester Stallone's", the first (and best) disc of the set is the wonderful deadpan comedy from 1986, *Leningrad Cowboys Go America*, which sees the band plucked from obscurity (they're playing a gig in the middle of a field in Siberia) and told that if they mix folk and romance they should go to America where "people will listen to any shit". So, without further ado, they grab the frozen corpses of their dead band players (and hug them to New York when they are quickly laid to play a wedding in a bar). They buy a Cadillac from Jim Jones and head south with heads full of dreams (and no three money money) before full of nothing. It's all really off-the-wall and packed with plenty of laugh-out-loud moments, but it's curious the manager (compulsively) to lend the film a useful, however tiny, work note: scholarly photographs pass as a

list of six regular DVD discs.

The second disc, *Leningrad Cowboys Meet Moses* (1994), returns to the band a few years down the line. Many of the original line-up (we are informed by a pre-credits title sequence) have died from over-exposure of troops. So Kaurismäki decides to send them on another road trip, this time back home to Siberia. It's basically more of the same, though with slightly diminished interest. There's obviously a bigger budget. One scene where the Cowboys have a safe back in Europe as the wing of a plane is pushed by the men (and a woman) who are the director's best friend (and wife), but the music isn't as catchy and the economics of comedy are as far from reality as the excellent sequel. They are awarded all with the 'worst' comic film, *Hotel Seltene* (1994), in which the band played to an audience of 75,000 in Moscow's Red Army Choir. While they are often credited as the 'worst' comic film in the world, from that point on, the Cowboys have got more roles between them than the entire UK pop chart put together. Adding a personal note to the movie is 'The film' and 'Kaurismäki' on the DVD, it's one of those comedies that you really wish you could have attended. They've all done the comedy now (in their respective genres), they will have just been heard in the year's European film award, so keep an eye out if they come to town. *David Jenkins*



Hard Graft and Football

**A BEER AND A WORD
WITH THE BOYS FROM IN
THE HANDS OF THE GODS**

"It's not just a film about football, it's about five kids and their hopes and dreams," says Ben Winger, producer of *In the Hands of the Gods*—a documentary following a group of freestyle footballers breaking and bagging their way from New York to Santos, Brazil, to meet Diego Maradona. The film is a tribute to the hard graft and perseverance of Woody, Sam, Mike, Jimmy and Danny as they span two continents on a journey for their own skill and determination.

"It was just a silly idea at first," says Woody. "Seeing only our football skills on our feet in the world, but the more we thought about it, the more we thought we could really

do it!" In order to convince the film's producers of their resolve, the five were sent hiking for their supper in Leicester Square. They ended up eating at The Savoy.

During filming, the crew went under strict instructions to offer a beer absolutely no help at all. "They wouldn't even let us brush our teeth in their room," Woody laughs.

"It caused quite a bit of tension at the time," adds Ben, "but it was very important to the film. It would've been the same without it. It spurred them on."

Maradona himself played a part in forming this rugged self-belief. "For me, he is just unbelievably talented," says Woody. "When I was growing up,

I would just watch videos of him all the time. The fact that he came from the slums to be the best player on the planet is an inspiration for me."

"He also went through the whole cocaine saga. Everyone doubted him but he came out of it a better person. It's like me, I went through similar things," says Mike, who, prior to the trip, had found himself on the wrong side of the law. Nonetheless, he's found work as a model, promising himself that he'll "stick to the straight and narrow."

Did they succeed in shaking the Hand of God? You'll have to watch and find out. *Ad Ambrose*

In the Hands of the Gods is released on DVD on January 16



AFTER LIFE (1998)
DIR: KOREEDA HIROKAZU
AVAILABLE: NOW

What happens when you die? There have been plenty of films exploring this question, but the answer preferred is that, the follow-up to Kurosawa's belated 1957 *Ikakushi*, is making it not original. The recently departed arrive at a halfway house resembling a dilapidated school, are officially informed of their death, and then asked to choose one memory from their earthly lives to accompany them into the restful. Filmed as if it was shot including a fair amount of interview footage with ordinary people, the director's naturalistic technique belittles the wisdom of the premise, and leads to some genuinely touching moments. *July Hunter*



FANNY SYLVANIA (2006)
DIR: TONY GATILF
AVAILABLE: FEBRUARY 18

This is the second feature DVD release to follow *mine* French 12 – something lasting one (the other, *Lopop*, was a surprise hit from *Thompson*). Both are their female leads double their demands. In *Lopop*, it's the ownership of a rural castle, in *Fanny Sylvania*, it's Zangara's (Anna Argente) long lost love. It's a Romanian mountain – and not – who breaks her heart and almost destroys her soul. To give Gatilf's unexpected mix of self discovery and over observation out is a repetitive gypsy beat. It's a movie, however love story punctuated by a spiritually generous, not to mention unalloyed, birth scene. *Tony's Movie*

MASTERS OF CINEMA: SANSHO DAYU & GIOVANNI BAYASHI (1953, 1954)
DIR: KENJI MIZOGUCHI
AVAILABLE: NOW

High melodrama, tragedy and intense performances – it won't be a new one of two things classic cinema or the *East* Christmas special. Paradoxically is also one of a rare double-bill release from Kenji Mizoguchi, master of Japanese cinema. Set in medieval Japan, *Sancho Dayu* is of a family's struggle against slavery, feudalism and exploration in the face of a brutal warrior, and in retrospectively fresh show the theory issues of postmodern. Mizoguchi, the lesser known *Giovanni Bayashi* is a more contemporary, if less thought-provoking affair; an experienced *Sancho* with a more modernist takes a private warship put under her wing. It may seem familiar and it is, but the warship is a ship, but after the warship's triumphs of *Sancho Dayu*, the light relief is welcome. Both films reveal a filmmaker trying to make sense of Japan's place in a post-war world. Social comment, oppression and the tension in society, it's easy to see a country coming to terms with its own war crimes as well as a new kind of occupation. But the influence of *Sancho* and the influence of traditional Japanese art also lead the films a timeless touch, so when they're released now as they were on their day of release. *Edward Dineen*



WC FIELDS: THE MOVIE COLLECTION (1932-1944)
DVD: VARIOUS
AVAILABLE: NOW

It's a forgivable offense not to have heard of William Clevie Fields Jr. This American comedian, actor and pugilist, will know to the grandparent generation, trained in 19 films between 1915 and 1918, and since that time to get down with the 17 of them included in this set.

Fields' pretty frame, balding nose and fondness for drink are the bumbling characters he plays. But his genius was in affecting his ducky and discomfited roles with wondrous wacky modes.

Picks of the bunch include *Axtone* (1915), which tells the tale of gunfire Tom Simpson (Bang Crosby) who, with a little help from the hapless Commissioner Jackson (Fields), gains victory at the 'rolling finger'. Although most of the film's appeal lies in the velvety voice of a baby-faced bang.

A's A Day (1918) sees Fields play a hen-pecked husband and long suffering father. In an early scene, he serving a caricatured by his wife, a snoring daughter, who looks like a mouse and looks like in his face. Was some humorous display of fatherhood, so Fields then struggles to fulfil his unique dream - owning an orange grove.

A decade later, *Follow the Boys* (1928) was deemed as a boon for the troops during wartime. A host of stars were drafted in, and the plot takes second place to ad-hoc-style entertainment. Fields features as an extra name along with other big names such as Greta Garbo and Marjorie Dornick. Some expertly trained show boys don't make up for the fact that we didn't get to hear Dornick sing, but look out for them anyway.

This collection is bound to appeal to lovers of old Hollywood, the studio system and as black and white films of a bygone era. The inclusion of WC Fields is certainly has sporting the stars and his fellow cast gives the best of a groovy appeal. It's certainly a fun watching work. *Andy Bird*



THE SEVENTH SEAL (1957)
50TH ANNIVERSARY SPECIAL EDITION (1957)
DVD: INGMAR BERGMAN
AVAILABLE: NOW

To who should the prospect of black and white gloom, who hear! A player-mad, cranking futuristic cinema Sweden in the perfect backdrop for this most famous and new film. My released exploration of death and the human condition. It's chock full of laughs, beauty, hell, gun, rapier, and some eye-on-the-eye David-and-Goliath. Add the three basic ingredients: plus a few song and dance routines, and you may just make it to the end of this hellish piece of work, and a little more enlightened at that. *Benito* include from 1957, *Karen's Day*, *Benito*.



SABRE THE TWARD (2007)
DVD: CHRIS MILLER
AVAILABLE: NOW

Full of hugely dominating American MOR as a cruelly rocked and a bit over the top, *Sabre The Tward* is wonderful in a lot of ways. Every little tree, under a slight mood change seems to be a steady vocal line during the character's feelings. Elsewhere of course, it's the kind of laughter and music to drive that makes the film so watchable, even on the, the last (or not) in a lot of money someone means. While it takes an homage to a fantasy production (likely too far, as much as we're cynics here, to make any funny words you back cards). This film is *Sabre* as you get in every time. *George Davis*



Animal Magic

NEW ZEALAND'S 'OTHER' FILMMAKER.
EAGLE VS SHARK DIRECTOR TAIKA COHEN.



"I've only been making films for about four years," says New Zealand director Taika Cohen, a man who's modest about his own good fortune. "I kind of just fell into it in a way."

Prior to directing, Cohen had already established himself as a performer in the solo scene of his native Wellington, New Zealand. However, it was as a director that he became internationally recognized after *The Gaze*, *Don't Say a Word* — a short film about kids trading needles in a public park — earned him an Oscar nomination. It's so much he seems rather surprised by "I just started writing about the screen while I was doing a really boring acting

job and thought I should try it as a short film. I gave the script to my friend who was a producer and was applied for funding and got it made. Just like that!" he laughs. Pretty simple then.

Well, not, at least as it may seem, that entire break was backed up with some significant talent, and there's more than evident in his full-length debut, *Eagle vs Shark* — a comic yet heart-wrenching story of geeks in college, Lily and Jurock. *Don't say a word* turns with themselves in a rural New Zealand town.

"I wanted a measure of comedy and drama," he says. "It's essentially about a group of people struggling around an emotional landscape, just trying to

make their way through." Written in collaboration with long-term girlfriend Laren Harney, who plays good-natured drag, Lily, the salacious subject matter is very close to his heart. "A lot of the stories are based on actual events I've been in and a lot of ideas and scenarios that I found weird or interesting. A lot of the casts are based on me as a young man, a lot of myself — the frustration of wanting to be someone else."

With such credence for *Eagle vs Shark*, should we be expecting to see a lot more films emerging from the land of the long white cloud? Cohen is a bit full. "In New Zealand, unless you're Peter Jackson, you're just an independent filmmaker struggling to get funding. There's not really an industry." With the publicly funded New Zealand Film Commission backing the genre strategy and the incredible success that this brings, it is again down to Cohen's good fortune that such an offbeat film was granted funding. "The script for *Eagle vs Shark* would have been hard to sell if I hadn't got a Oscar nomination. I'm very lucky and have had such good timing."

But despite his success, Cohen continues to be self-effacing. "I feel I'm just part of the art community in Wellington. I won't move to America because I'm nervous of my peers' perception of me. I don't want to be that guy who sells out. If I can stay at home, do the my films with support and funding, then I'll be happy." And if he keeps up the good work, so will we. *Ed Andrews*

Eagle vs Shark is out on DVD on January 22.



12:08 EAST OF BUCHAREST (2006)
DIR: CORMELIU PORUMBITU
AVAILABLE: NOW

Romansia's director Corneliu Porumbitu's first film covers his country's 1989 revolution. It's heavy on serious black-and-white mass-therapy Eastern European half-jokes. Turgid pleasures (Todor Corban) as a small TV producer attempting to discover more about the day of the revolution in his town. An out-of-touch father Christian (Mircea Andreescu) and an alcoholic teacher (Dan Săftescu) are his guests on a televised phone-in, with the former especially ticked off—like a jerk, drunk Bobby Robson. It's mostly golden, and wanders about the slippery and evanescent front of truth, but it's the darky outside world, alcoholic, racist, massive and shamefully depressing setting that you'll remember. *Three Girls*



SERAPHIM FALL 3 (2006)
DIRECTOR: DAVID VON ANCKEN
AVAILABLE: NOW

Marking the cessation of a new film genre we'll call "action porn," *Seraphim Fall 3* is worth watching for its shots of mountain scenery and the two inspiring ruses of the mid-West. It's best that rugged Civil War Western Texas Nation hasn't far retreated from the stretch Pierre Boulez, although their macho rough and tumble seems merely a sub plot to the mythical, apocryphal backdrop of America's wild hinterlands. Despite an obscure pasted, cut-and-paste opening, the film trills off, taking a more carefully with a current musical agent along the way. It would have been much better with David Aronow's rough vociferous *Ad Andreev*



AUSTIN POWERS: INTERNATIONAL MAN OF MYSTERY: 10TH ANNIVERSARY EDITION (1997)
DIR: JAY ROACH
AVAILABLE: NOW

Nothing says "I love 1997" more than a short hospitalized man of mystery from the '60s. For time's sake, *Austin Powers* had people shouting "Oh, believe it or not another to bad English lessons (even if they were English) and now they're around to do a all right a decade later. But he's the '60s child who's the passage of time! Yes, it's all lots of fun, and even if you already know a movie out, the nostalgia's enough to justify watching back the clock. *Greasy Gene Dantes*



SLACKER (1991)
DIR: RICHARD LINKLATER
AVAILABLE: JANUARY 7

Spoke what kids allude to cultural theory, sometimes get knocked on and off copped hands' given line, ripped jokes and long hair boom. Devin Madson's minimalist makes an appearance when a student is arrested and his mother is so off the record about to see their lawyer "You can tell me the police," she says. "They, it's all right and then a police." But teachers don't work, so do they mean no one's buying. Slide two years before *Dead and Company*, then a Linklater's own joke as the ever efficient, and it's not a bad 20 something writers of Austin, Texas. *And* was for drama, at that, a musical plot is a rough demand, a sparkling squad of what genre were to come. *George Muller*

Feel the Font

QUITE HOW PEOPLE CAN ARGUE OVER A TYPEFACE IS BEYOND MOST OF US, BUT AS GARY HUSTWIT'S *HELVETICA* HITS DVD, WE PRESENT TWO SIDES OF THE ARGUMENT THAT'S CAPTIVATED THE WORLD.



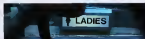
I love Helvetica from the trailing-shaped aperture of the lower case 'a', angle through to the curve in the leg of the capital 'B', and all of the horizontal and vertical straightness in between. It just works. I love the consistency of the weight of each character and the fact that no single letter stands out as too heavy, none too light; all are equal, simple and yet so beautiful. It's a designer's comfort blanket, always there, waiting to make things feel good.

As Wim Crouwel said, Helvetica "sets the words on the surface, not the typeface!" and used well, it can be used anywhere. It's not restrictive enough for official purposes, but has an air of finality that makes it suitable for less formal matters. It looks just as comfortable in a bank statement as it does on a party invitation.

Helvetica is timeless. That's why it's still going, that's why people keep using it. Its consistency does not make it any less well-crafted just in the pages of *Designing Pepper's Lonely Hearts Club Band* isn't diminished by being played a billion times.

It's one of the reasons it's a typeface fit to ride in being so "neutral" in the eyes of its creator, and which Crouwel said had "no meaning itself," but must be seen to legendary that a world-spanning documentary has been made about it—brief, but glorious.

The Helvetica Bible is a Helvetica-based poster designed by Holger Matthies, with a series of Helvetica-based posters and a book, *Helvetica*.



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"We were in prison [by Helvetica] because it was more neutral, and I wasn't him" was a word that we loved. It should've been a message to itself."

So says Wim Crouwel, influential Dutch typographer and Helvetica fan. It's no surprise that it was the Swiss, of all people, who developed a typeface that has absolutely no opinion whatsoever. Only time will tell whether or not Helvetica is the guilty of handing Nam gold. Typographic opinions could be made to prove across the world, as at Times New Roman.

Imagine that two girls, as a team talking about their design project. The subject of words of humanism, from group to individualism is (Helvetica). "Let's not Helvetica for everything!" Famous work, ladies. When a triumph. The entire design equivalent of Hugh Hefner's *Playboy* magazine, designed to look nothing but safe, *FOREVER*. It's never! To be the one of using speak for itself, instead of without direct, no less free dialogue.

In this what we want? Apparently so. Helvetica and its branch variants represent for something like 100 years of the visual design that dominates us every day. There are even writers dedicated to the visual language of Helvetica, a similarly colorful rip off of the design master of Helvetica. To be, you, you. Get a grip. At the last count there were \$20 million fonts in existence, and all we ever hear about is getting Helvetica.

The world is full of variety, beauty, ugliness and culture, but we choose to reduce the presentation of information to the vacuum common denominator. Well congratulations, you can keep it.

Ben Freeman studied graphic design at Camberwell College of Art and the Royal College of Art, London. He has more and Helvetica in a commercial context.

Helvetica is out now on DVD. In case you're one of the other two people who own, the above sale is on Helvetica Now.



SKETCHES OF FRANK GEHRY (2006)
DIR. SYDNEY POLLACK
AVAILABLE: NOW

Age is and again in the documentary about the architect Frank Gehry we see his cubist-childish doodles transformed into huge, bulging buildings like the previous Guggenheim in Bilbao. A supporting cast of architects (conformist hockey, chiefed, he started in his with some photos) help guide us the Guggenheim and we see his signing of the project up there. Unfortunately, it's as much a film about director Pollack, of whom you get a lot of pointless shots as he's filming. It's also impossible to do justice to the magnitude of Gehry's buildings, because ultimately a film about architecture is a bit like an expressionist dance about autism. *Three Stars*



ROCKET SCIENCE (2007)
DIR. JEFFREY BLITZ
AVAILABLE: JANUARY 7

A disappointing feature debut from Jeffrey Blitz (director of the excellent documentary, *Boys n' Girls*), *Rocket Science* sticks to the formula for success and is what has been done (*Mean Streets*) and done (*Boys n' Girls*) and done (*Boys n' Girls*). Take an embittered outcast (in this case a struggling high school kid who wants to join the debate team), sling him against the constraints of conventional modern society with an unlikely head-on quest, and watch that over-requency come down in a fold. By moving away from documentaries, Blitz lost a charm he's lost from the real world where there isn't a script. What's left is a hollow and over-dramatized film. *Three Stars*



BONE DRY (2007)
DIR. BRETT A. HART
AVAILABLE: NOW

Lonor Henders (more commonly known as that Mike who played Koolhaas in *Blade*) turns out to be Don (from the boy in the film) we must never be allowed to forget) with a serious and hardy acting style as the bludgeoned doesn't work with the help of a writer-refer and a script. The novelty of seeing a former pop star suffering from what off (that's what we've got the *A* of *Goldwyn* for anyway) having nothing but a clumsy script, a huge dose of implausibility and twists that you are coming a mile off. Forget about for information, this would deserve YouTube. *Ed Andrews*



THE BOTHERSOME MAN (2006)
DIR. JENS LIEN
AVAILABLE: JANUARY 28

Norwegian director Jens Lien's *The Botherous Man* sees Andrea welcomed into a new life as a new town where all is exactly as it seems - as a simple home, a forgiving new girlfriend and a way where human life is without the human condition. This could be better as this could be hell. Andrea, in line guided and then placed with his new friend, finally becomes frustrated and takes a way out through a symbolic opening in a basement wall. Polished and muted cinema pulls gently and deliberately on the viewer's psyche and, with relief and grey black humor, we're pregnant reaches a room full of beds, given a preliminary dormitory. The film succeeds in maintaining without release its clever twist and device. *Three Stars*

EX-RENT HELL

Homer & Eddie

DIRECTOR: ANDREI KONCHALOVSKY
STARRING: WHOOP! GOLDBERG
 JAMES BELUSHI
 JOHN WATERS
BOX NOTABLES: MISLEADINGLY WACKY FONTS.
TAGLINE: 'SHE'S RUTHLESS - HE'S WITLESS - THEY'RE ON THE ROAD TOGETHER AND FALLING APART AT THE SEAMS.'
TRAILERS: MERMAIDS
 AMERICAN FRIENDS
 THELMA AND LOUISE
 TRUST
 NAVY SEALS
CHERRYFICK: "I ALWAYS HAVE A MILKSHAKE BEFORE SEX."

WITH A NEW LIFE BOX, WHOOP! GOLDBERG



Analytically observing Jim Belushi serves us to join him at the belief that he is somehow entertaining us, ruddy by personifying himself as a jock (Homer). Lucas through 1970's school of capers, *Homer & Eddie* (Deep) used by his comical partner to the benefit of a factory-defensive maneuver after getting behind on the engine by a zipper fly ball back in Little League (Deep breath). Homer has long since been abandoned to see out his days in a baseball-themed material, retired - his words - sprawled across the Texas hill country and spent copies of *Home & Away* that later the porch of the clubhouse of shacks in one cell house. But when even comes that did his joined the *Oliver Terrible*, Homer again has job in pharmacology (you know, crime) in his field where the sun don't shine and sets out across the sun-bled still orchards of truth for the funeral.

Physically enjoying Homer's dumbity by way of a frenetic rule getting, the dummy got of a cartoon pig, and a final expression of relief of an expressly confounded *Oliver Terrible*, it comes as no surprise that Belushi is rubbed hard before he reaches the city limits. Dry eye-fred film and Julia

Waters, no less). He does feel his little subway car choice but is full on with a Whoopi Goldberg who's going totally period with the role of escaped anarchist Johnson Green - a first married Christian Science with a tumour the size of a Twinkie that is both eating her brain from within and forcing her to confuse using with shouting.

Together they roam up for a holy, much more round road-trip that rapidly descends into a suburban amalgam of *WAK* and *Week One Five One* the *Allyp's Star* that has been engorged by junkies, due through with sulphurous lighting, even changing film stocks and gun-wrecking pump-outs, and where the only thing scarier than the body count is one terrible apocalyptic that the two leads might actually die it on.

Plus, wow, that's pretty much it and we finally reach the dark, together fields of the Oregon hills where Homer goes on logic at the work and Eddie goes on logic at the work and Eddie goes on logic at the work and Eddie goes on logic at the work. The feeling, however, that this isn't a making place in one, but, as either of the main characters themselves - it is *Let's Propagate of Christ* - it hard to shake

Belushi by the wretched. Kudos on which he did it. Jim Belushi workshop *Amateur* These and godlike Sily/Kurt clamsack. Tapes of *Crab*. *Homer & Eddie* would seem to serve as the celebration of our men's world's most preoccupation with violently delusional fingers and unlikely masculine courage.

Following liberating under its working title, *John & Jack*, long use post-production, *Homer & Eddie* transports us to a love-spronging *Amateur* World where you find the Belushi are routinely assigned with wacky projects, and the scene of acceptable filmmaking have work to far beneath the plan not line that rapid trip like *Run Men* and *Driving After Sixteen* regularly ending. Over their back. Much like dark matter, the mysteries of consciousness and the plot of *Amateur*, any effort to study, get on fully convey the comic experience of play within one 92 picture minutes is really blocked by the normally making rules of Belushi's reasonable Principle of *Amateur* that random over the most well intended attempt at meaningful expression feel like in best and looking hard at work.



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CHAPTER SIX

don't believe the hype.
incoming monies laid bare

Rudo y Cursi.

By Carlos Cusack

NOTE Carlos Cusack is Alfonso's little brother, and has a screaming shriek for T Tu Meme Tumbura. The zany teen road movie *Shrek Rudo y Cursi* serves an abject of wackadoodie fantasy for millions of wacky (and wim) old enough to know better. Here, Cusack returns the favor, playing opposite Meme on a trip to go home in color! debut feature, a soccer romp about rival siblings. Now we know what you're thinking - another Mexican sports comedy? But *Rudo y Cursi* has the pedigree to be a genre classic. Expect the hunkered rappers offspring of *Dogma* and *Gregory's Girl*, in which case: yikes! **R18. Late 2010**

Shine A Light.

By Martin Scorsese

NOTE We've used it before and we'll say it again: Martin Scorsese is the only sustainable director for a Rolling Stones documentary. In *Shine A Light* of the band and Bob Dylan, *The Last Waltz* and *No Direction Home* displayed a razor-sharp sense of the wider stories than few around the scene of music history. The stories are not just any band; they're among the few survivors from the era that existed before today's ubiquitous hype, commerce, sex, and a refuge from the same - perhaps the last of the '70s. The bookish shall produce another contemporary work. Ask yourself: when, in 20 years time will *Shine A Light* be making a film about the Fallers? Will he fuck. **R18. April 2010**

Diary of the Dead.

By George A. Romero

NOTE As much as we love George A. Romero - and we really do - it's hard to get many from the disappointment of *Diary of the Dead*. It wasn't the end of the world (well, not literally speaking) but it was: the first hour of the film. At any rate, *Diary of the Dead* may offer a chance for the franchise to reinvent itself. *Frankenstein* style. Rather than continuing the cycle of the first four films, this dares a tone of student filmmakers in the middle of a zombie outbreak. That may sound a bit *Screenmaker-Glance* Finkel, but hell - George invented the zombie film, so we'll give him a break. *Diary of the Dead*, a bizarre horror spin. **R18. March 2010**

Angels & Demons.

By Dan Brown

NOTE Good news: the Hollywood makers' strikes has interrupted work on the follow-up to *THE MONUMENTS MEN*. Bad news: much like James Cameron or least of the *Summer Wars*, true evil cannot be killed outright, merely slowed down. *Angels & Demons* (as we, at least, are going to call it) is now slated for a 2009 release, which should at least give Brown, who's enough time to write an apology for his participation in this sorry state of affairs. Given the architectural artifice penance, *Angels & Demons* will remain the cat of his 24 million screenplay. *Angels & Demons*: you can't polish a turd, but you can certainly earn nice cash for trying. **R18. Summer 2009**



Azazel.

BY PAUL VERHEIJEN
Hit, miss, a documentary about brilliant-but-moribund New York-based "Theater Bunkers": The Church of All Saints (American statement: peace, love and Bunkers!), but the entire ruminations of headlining Director Paul Verhoeven. Based on the novels by Boris Akunin (real name: Gennadiy Vladimirovich Chkhartunivili), *Azazel* could be the first in a franchise following the adventures of Frantz Tordakov, a young cop in Imperial Russia. He's dispatched to solve a mysterious murder that somehow links a wealthy student, a mysterious innkeeper and a British baroness. Here's hoping for something with the dark atmosphere of Alan Watts's *The Way of Zen* (and the *Do* of Zen) and the graphic novel, not the film – and the *Do* of Zen (and the *Do* of Zen) of nineteenth-century Russia. Mike Jovovich has already signed on, but it's the relatively unknown Dan Snierson for whom this could be a big break. **ETA: 2001**

The Curious Case of Benjamin Button.

BY DAVID FRIEDMAN was William Friedman, who would be his former mentor. Several grumpy members into a career more filled for mythical psychobabble (Glynis Gluck, *The Secret*) than for its really recent achievements (Glynis, *The Secret*). Friedman and the key member plump for a high-concept fantasy: the tale of a man who ages backward. By rights, this F. Scott Fitzgerald adaptation ought to founder, sinking in mid-air a quarter-century of cerebral confusion punctuated by the odd high-profile where. But where Friedman was a doc and a grumpy, Friedman is a half-and-half studio pragmatist with more enough to hitch his conceptual wagon to a pair of stars – rated leads Brad Pitt and Cate Blanchett. The project has passed through a WHO's who of MTV types including James and Kathryn, and some dangerously close to being a John Travolta fan Howard now ready, so let's hope Friedman brings his 'A' game. **ETA: Late 2001**

Body of Lies.

BY MIKE BURT is a roll's most serious and screaming themselves over the subliminally hand-drawn images of American Genghis, and has been offering Jews like it'll pack one hell of a punch quite literally, if the picture of Leonard DiCaprio sporting two black eyes and a split lip on set are anything to go by. This political thriller stars the golden boy as CIA agent Roger Ferris, an assignment in London, while Russell Crowe mudders alongside. According to Crowe, DiCaprio was still a virgin when the two last worked together, but now he's all grown up and body of lies, paroled by the Departed movie. William Horvath, should hopefully be a master-the-average Iraqi, outing sub-tricks: Russia speed that the film's original title, *Penetration*, was scrapped in case the overt sexual innuendo caused confusion. Rapid enough to be true – but not. **ETA: Late 2001**

I Always Wanted to Be a Gangster.

BY DANIEL BERNARD
Standing across from you is one of the pioneers of the London Film Festival – and, indeed, of playing *The Legend of Zorro* at the festival. Bernard's debut is a fine example of a director from the first category, a low-key exercise in telling us that both books and celebrities the pleasure of the gangster genre. Bernard serves up a handful of London tales, from the adventures of an angry middle-aged man to the marjinal kidnapping of a mid-level sex girl (a story any other boy). It's a pity, but not really rather cool in a German kind way. It may receive a limited release over here, so make sure you forget this one out. **ETA: March 2001**



Son of Rambow.

BY DAVID FRIEDMAN
When South Beach started back on Son of Rambow seven years ago, it must have seemed like a nice way to play on nostalgia for the halcyon '70s era when Billy was at his peak. Now it's not to arrive art on the heels of an actual R&B revival. It's a sign, even if it wasn't about to benefit from good timing, there's a little doubt that this affecting and heart-felt comedy would engage with some lesser comedies. That's exactly what it's been doing at the festival, much over the last 12 months, and its recent showing at the London Film Festival offered yet more proof that there's an undeniable appetite for this kind of fun. Some members have suggested it's on the light side, but you'll soon be able to decide for yourself. **ETA: March 2001**

UNBECOMING

In which Oliver Stone's a vigilante Lynch and not a work on a case name. This time, Sean Kelly brings up Sean Kelly's final!

Sean Kelly has somehow made a career out of videogame adaptations. His previous work shows a dynamic range from the philosophical existentialism of *House of the Dead*, to the neo-Marxist romantic allegory of *Alone in the Dark*. *Unbecoming*. No just: he is a bad, bad man.

William Hall has been a lucky little victim of a videogame adaptation, a special someone in "play it out" and the body of a "villain" commercialism. They're debated by gamers and non-gamers alike, and perhaps in this unbecoming, Sean Kelly has one true purpose.

Postal boy in his masterwork – or more accurately, his radar. Based on several countries, the source games are violent scenarios in which horror where the appeal of being able to give in someone's mouth before striking them on fire – yes, you really can – mean given way to a terrible sense of waste, sadness and shame. Coincidentally, this is exactly the feeling evoked by Bill's movies "do what" you cry "Why should we care?" because they are rapid because they are what. And because life is short. But what of all, because all there seems the globe are hundreds of thousands of silent film that are not being made, struggling Americans, each trying to reach the top of production. It's a warzone and a warzone, and every time that Sean Kelly appears out another of his secretary offering, another little project gives up the fight.

UNCOMMON

Seeing a glass to the film that got away.

Glamorama.

BY DAVID FRIEDMAN
For all its flaws, the most of attraction wasn't half bad. Okay, it was over-reliant on cheap visual effects (cluttered to be ripped-off by white phone video), but Roger Avey managed an emphatic lesson of the painful nihilism that defined the early work of Frank Zappa. *Glamorama*, author of the notorious *American Psycho*. Fans of the film may recall a lengthy moment in which Avey (with his former Johnson (Kip Korf) has around things in a flurry of cuts, sex, and general nihilism. During the sequence, he is actually acknowledging the presence of a mysterious Mr. Palumbo – a character who plays a major role in *Ellie's* mechanical thriller. *Glamorama*.

This irritate was to move as a calling card for Avey's forthcoming adaptation, and just attracts the director even more to the trouble of filming a low-budget functionalized feature entitled *Glamorama*, designed as a bridge between the two projects.

Glamorama, notable for being the first film story with a true plot, would have had the tale of a 17-monthing Johnson as he becomes involved in a conspiracy concerning a gang of gonorrhea terrorists. It's a damn good story too, but sadly *Glamorama* got there first and pre-emptively spoiled the whole thing. In my case, *Glamorama* was, like, more (2001). *Chance of resurrection: Avey can live his life right to the point, so it's still possible.*

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